

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-third
Semiannual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

October 1 and 2, 1983

Official Report
of the
One Hundred Fifty-third
Semiannual General Conference

of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah
October 1 and 2, 1983

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Copyright © 1984 Corporation of the President
of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

All Rights Reserved
Printed in the United States of America

THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, 1983. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended and presided at the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, attended the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the general priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to over six hundred stake centers. The general priesthood session was carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 1,153 locations in many different countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball, Marion G. Romney, and Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. *Additional members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and

members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, October 1, 1983, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren and sisters, we are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 153rd Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Church, who is seated on the stand, presides at this conference and has asked me to conduct this session. His advancing age and physical disabilities have in recent months restricted some of his activities. But he has intermittently met with the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in the Thursday temple meetings, as recently as last Thursday, and his presence there is always welcome and greatly appreciated, as it is appreciated this morning.

We acknowledge likewise the presence of President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who, because of physical problems, also has been limited in his active participation in Church administration. We are grateful for your presence, President Romney, and extend our love and best wishes to you.

We welcome those who are participating in the conference this morning, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders M. Russell Ballard and Hugh W. Pinnock preside; or the many thousands who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, and television. The proceedings are being carried to over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States (including Alaska) and Canada, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church and the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened this session by singing "For the Strength of the Hills."

The Choir will now sing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder Royden G. Derrick offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

In view of his recent call to serve as the president of the Washington (D.C.) Temple, we hereby extend to Elder Franklin D. Richards an honorable release as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He has served as the Senior President of that quorum since it was organized.

Also in view of the call of Sister Shirley W. Thomas to assist her husband in his duties as president of the Australia Melbourne Mission, we extend to her an honorable release from her service as the second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

All who wish to join in extending a sincere vote of thanks and appreciation to Elder Richards and Sister Thomas for their remarkable service, please indicate by the uplifted hand. Thank you.

It is proposed that Elder Richard G. Scott be called as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy, filling the vacancy created by the release of Elder Franklin D. Richards.

Those in favor manifest it by the uplifted hand. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It also is proposed that Sister Ann Stoddard Reese succeed Sister Shirley W. Thomas as the second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

All in favor please manifest it by the uplifted hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

With these exceptions, there have been no changes in the General Authorities or general officers of the Church since the last general conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

All in favor manifest it by the uplifted hand. Any opposed may so manifest it. Thank you.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Faith as our foundation

To Latter-day Saints throughout the world, and to men and women of goodwill everywhere: we greet you in the name of the Lord as we gather from near and far in this great world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We affirm before all men our belief in God the Eternal Father and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. This is the first article of our faith and the foundation of all of our work.

President Kimball's influence

We are particularly pleased to have with us—yes, pleased and honored—this remarkable man whom we sustain as a prophet of God, our prophet, seer, and revelator, our friend and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball.

We regret that the condition of his health does not permit him to speak to us. We have heard him many times in the past as he has spoken from this pulpit, and the memories of his great testimonies continue to encourage and strengthen all of us.

Who can measure the influence of this man upon others? I suppose if we

were to seek for just one word to characterize him, it would be *love*.

The power of love

I read from my notebook a statement he made on October 23, 1980, to a large assembly of Chinese brethren and sisters in Taipei, Taiwan. He said on that occasion:

"Somehow the Lord gave me from the time of my birth a spirit of love. I loved my companions in the mission field. I loved those against whom I played basketball as a boy. I loved people in all the world. I love you."

If he were to speak to us this morning, I am confident that would be the tenor of his remarks. This great reaching out with love has been the chemistry of his remarkable leadership. His life is a lesson for each of us, a lesson in the wondrous power of love.

Though his body is tired and weak, the force of that leadership is felt throughout the Church in all the world. It is an agent that binds us together as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its unifying influence is felt in all of the higher councils of the Church.

Hallmark of the true church

We are grateful that President Romney is also with us as First Counselor in the First Presidency. He also is having health problems. Were he to speak, I am confident that he would testify of this great and moving power in the life and character of our President. I bear witness of it. I am confident that each of the Twelve and the Seventy and the Bishopric could do likewise.

I thank each one of the members of these councils and quorums who con-

stitute the General Authorities of the Church. I thank them for their love and loyalty, for their faith and devotion, for their unity of purpose and action, under the leadership of our President.

The Lord said that except ye are one, ye are not mine (see D&C 38:27).

This great unity is the hallmark of the true church of Christ. It is felt among our people throughout the world. As we are one, we are his.

Onward progress of the kingdom

And so, as we open this great conference, from which there will be radiated across the world a feeling of love, we pray that we shall be blessed of the Lord. We pray for our prophet dear, whom we love and honor. We pray for one another that we may go on in unity and strength. If we do so, no power beneath the heavens can stop the onward progress of this great kingdom. I pray that we shall never be wanting in our faith, in our devotion, in our love for the Lord and his work, and in our desire to serve unitedly for the advancement of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Send Forth Thy Spirit."

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will then address us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Send Forth Thy Spirit."

President Ezra Taft Benson

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we need to place unreserved confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we accept as the Son of God. Until the world accepts Him as the Savior of mankind, lives His teachings, and looks to Him as the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* in all phases of our lives, we shall continue in our anxiety about the future and our ability to cope with the challenges that mortality brings to each of us.

The fundamental principle of our religion is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is it expedient that we center our confidence, our hope, and our trust in one solitary figure? Why is faith in Him so necessary to peace of mind in this life and hope in the world to come?

Hope, confidence, and strength to overcome

Our answers to these questions determine whether we face the future with courage, hope, and optimism or with apprehension, anxiety, and pessimism.

My message and testimony is this: Only Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to provide that hope, that confidence, and that strength to overcome the world and rise above our human failings. To do that, we must place our faith in Him and live by His laws and teachings.

Why faith in Jesus Christ?

The Lord God Omnipotent

Jesus Christ was and is the *Lord God Omnipotent*. (See Mosiah 3:5.) He was chosen before He was born. He was the all-powerful Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the source of life and light to all things.

His word is the law by which all things are governed in the universe. All things created and made by Him are subject to His infinite power.

Son of God

Jesus Christ is the *Son of God*.

He came to this earth at a fore-appointed time through a royal birth-right that preserved His godhood. Combined in His nature were the human attributes of His mortal mother and the divine attributes and powers of His Eternal Father.

His unique heredity made Him heir to the honored title—the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. As the Son of God, He inherited powers and intelligence which no human ever had before or since. He was literally Immanuel, which means “God with us.” (See Matthew 1:23.)

Even though He was God’s Son sent to earth, the divine plan of the Father required that Jesus be subjected to all the difficulties and tribulations of mortality. Thus He became subject to “temptations, . . . hunger, thirst, and fatigue” (Mosiah 3:7).

The Redeemer

To qualify as the *Redeemer* of all our Father’s children, Jesus had to be perfectly obedient to all the laws of God. Because He subjected Himself to the will of the Father, He grew “from grace to grace, until he received a fulness” of the Father’s power. Thus He had “all power, both in heaven and on earth” (D&C 93:13, 17).

Once this truth about the One we worship as the Son of God is understood, we can more readily comprehend how He had power to heal the sick, cure all manner of diseases, raise the dead, and command the elements. Even devils, whom He cast out, were subject to Him and acknowledged His divinity.

The great Lawgiver

As the great *Lawgiver*, He gave laws and commandments for the bene-

fit of all our Heavenly Father's children. Indeed, His law fulfilled all previous covenants with the house of Israel. Said He:

"Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9).

His law required all mankind, regardless of station in life, to repent and be baptized in His name and receive the Holy Ghost as the sanctifying power to cleanse themselves from sin. Compliance with these laws and ordinances will enable each individual to stand guiltless before Him at the day of judgment. Those who so comply are likened to one who builds his house on a firm foundation so that even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against them" (3 Nephi 11:39).

The Rock of our salvation

Appropriately we praise Him as the *Rock of our salvation*. (See 2 Nephi 4:30).

To have any measure of appreciation and gratitude for what He accomplished in our behalf, we must remember these vital truths:

Jesus came to earth to do our Father's will.

He came with a foreknowledge that He would bear the burden of the sins of us all.

He knew that He would be lifted up on the cross.

He was born to be the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind.

Only He was able and willing to redeem

He was *able* to accomplish His mission because He was the Son of God and He possessed the power of God.

He was *willing* to accomplish His mission because He loves us.

No mortal being had the power or capability to redeem all other mortals from their lost and fallen condition, nor could any other voluntarily forfeit his

life and thereby bring to pass a universal resurrection for all other mortals.

Only Jesus Christ was able and willing to accomplish such a redeeming act of love.

We may never understand nor comprehend in mortality *how* He accomplished what He did, but we must not fail to understand *why* He did what He did.

Everything He did was prompted by His unselfish, infinite love for us. Hear His own words:

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . .

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:16, 18).

As was so characteristic of His entire mortal experience, the Savior submitted to our Father's will and took the bitter cup and drank.

He suffered the pains of all men in Gethsemane so they would not have to suffer if they would repent.

He submitted Himself to humiliation and insults from His enemies without complaint or retaliation.

And, finally, He endured the flogging and brutal shame of the cross. Only then did He voluntarily submit to death. In His words:

"No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

The Resurrection and the Life

He is the *Resurrection* and the *Life*. (See John 11:25.)

This power to revive His own life was possible because Jesus Christ was God—even the Son of God. Because He had the power to overcome death, all mankind will be resurrected.

"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

How we reverence His name—yes, even the hallowed titles that represent His deeds!

Great Exemplar

He is our *Great Exemplar*.

He was perfectly obedient to our Heavenly Father and showed us how to forsake the world and keep our priorities in perspective.

Because of His love for us, He showed us how to rise above petty weaknesses and to demonstrate affection, love, and charity in our relationships with others.

The Bread of Life

He is the *Bread of Life*. (See John 6:35.)

By fasting, prayer, and service to others, He showed that "man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4) but must be nourished by the word of God.

He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), and so He is able to help them that are tempted (see Hebrews 2:18).

Prince of Peace

He is the *Prince of Peace*—the ultimate *Comforter*. (See Isaiah 9:6.)

As such He has power to comfort an anguished heart pierced by sorrow or sin. He provides a special kind of peace that no human agency can provide:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

The Good Shepherd

He is the *Good Shepherd*. (See John 10:11.)

He possesses all the attributes of the divine nature of God. He is virtuous, patient, kind, long-suffering,

gentle, meek, and charitable. If we are weak or deficient in any of these qualities, He stands willing to strengthen and compensate.

Wonderful Counselor

He is a *Wonderful Counselor*. (See Isaiah 9:6.)

Indeed there is no human condition—be it suffering, incapacity, inadequacy, mental deficiency, or sin—which He cannot comprehend or for which His love will not reach out to the individual.

He pleads today:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Advocate, Mediator, Judge

He is our *Advocate, Mediator, and Judge*.

Because He is God, He is perfectly equitable with justice and mercy. He can simultaneously plead our cause and judge our destiny.

Faith in Him is more than mere acknowledgment that He lives. It is more than professing belief.

Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. As God, He has infinite power, intelligence, and love. There is no human problem beyond His capacity to solve. Because He descended below all things (see D&C 122:8), He knows how to help us rise above our daily difficulties.

Faith in Him means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does. We, therefore, must look to Him "in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:36.)

Faith in Him means trusting that He has all power over all men and all nations. There is no evil which He cannot arrest. All things are in His hands. This earth is His rightful dominion. Yet He permits evil so that we can make choices between good and evil.

"Love the Lord . . . and thy neighbor"

His gospel is the perfect prescription for all human problems and social ills.

But His gospel is only effective as it is applied in our lives. Therefore, we must "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

Unless we *do* His teachings, we do not demonstrate faith in Him.

Think what a different world this would be if all mankind would do as He said: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

The perfect example

What then is the answer to the question "What is to be done?" concerning the problems and dilemmas that individuals, communities, and nations face today? Here is His simple prescription:

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has *all* wisdom, and *all* power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

" . . . Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things *see that ye do them*" (Mosiah 4:9-10; italics added).

As members of the Church, we are "under obligation to make the sinless

Son of Man [our] ideal—the one perfect being who ever walked the earth.

"Sublimest Example of Nobility

"God-like in nature

"Perfect in his love

"Our Redeemer

"Our Savior

"The immaculate Son of our Eternal Father

"The Light, the Life, the Way"

(David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, June 1951, p. 478).

With all my soul, I love Him.

I humbly testify that He is the same loving, compassionate Lord today as when He walked the dusty roads of Palestine. He is close to His servants on this earth. He cares about and loves each of us today. Of that you can be assured.

He lives today as our Lord, our Master, our Savior, our Redeemer, and our God.

God bless us all to believe Him, to accept Him, to worship Him, and to fully trust in Him, and to follow Him is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Savior, Redeemer of My Soul" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Savior, Redeemer of My Soul."

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Witnesses to Book of Mormon

Some time ago I held in my hand my mother's copy of her favorite book. It was a timeworn copy of the Book of Mormon. Almost every page was marked; in spite of tender handling, some of the leaves were dog-eared, and the cover was worn thin. No one had to tell her that one can get closer to God by reading the Book of Mormon than by any other book. She was already there. She had read it, studied it, prayed over it, and taught from it. As a young man I held her book in my hands and tried to see, through her eyes, the great truths of the Book of Mormon to which she so readily testified and which she so greatly loved.

As a young boy in the Cottonwood Ward, I was greatly impressed when I listened to James H. Moyle tell in sacrament meeting of his having heard both Martin Harris and David Whitmer, two of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, affirm their testimony concerning that book. They, along with Oliver Cowdery, had testified in connection with the original publication of the Book of Mormon "that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we . . . bear record that these things are true" ("The Testimony of Three Witnesses," Book of Mormon).

When James H. Moyle visited David Whitmer, Whitmer was an old man; he was out of the Church and was living in a log cabin in Richmond, Missouri. Of this visit to David Whitmer, James H. Moyle stated in this very building on March 22, 1908:

"I went to his humble home, . . . and I told him . . . as a young man starting out in life I wanted to know from him . . . what he knew about the Book of Mormon, and what about the testimony he had published to

the world concerning it. He told me in all the solemnity of his advanced years, that the testimony he had given to the world, and which was published in the Book of Mormon, was true, every word of it, and that he had never deviated nor departed in any particular from that testimony, and that nothing in the world could separate him from the sacred message that was delivered to him. I still wondered if it was not possible that he could have been deceived, . . . so I induced him to relate to me, under such cross-examination as I was able to interpose, every detail of what took place. He described minutely the spot in the woods, the large log that separated him from the angel, and that he saw the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, that he handled them, and that he did hear the voice of God declare that the plates were correctly translated. I asked him if there was any possibility for him to have been deceived, and that it was all a mistake, but he said, 'No' " (quoted in Gordon B. Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951], pp. 366-67).

The keystone of our religion

However, the Book of Mormon did not yield its profound message to me as an unearned legacy. I question whether one can acquire an understanding of this great book except through singleness of mind and strong purpose of heart. We must ask not only if it is true, but also do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Said Moroni, "Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4).

Joseph Smith, who translated the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon came, had this to say: "I told

the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

The dictionary says that a keystone is "the uppermost and last set stone of an arch which completes it and locks its members together." A secondary definition is "the fundamental element, as of science or doctrine" (*Funk and Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary, Britannica World Language Edition*, 2 vols., 1956, 1:735).

The Book of Mormon is a keystone because it establishes and ties together eternal principles and precepts, rounding out basic doctrines of salvation. It is the crowning gem in the diadem of our holy scriptures.

It is a keystone for other reasons also. In the promise of Moroni previously referred to—namely, that God will manifest the truth of the Book of Mormon to every sincere inquirer having faith in Christ (see Moroni 10:4)—we have a key link in a self-locking chain.

Keystone of our individual faith

A confirming testimony of the Book of Mormon convinces that "Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God" (Title Page, Book of Mormon) and also spiritually verifies (a) the divine calling of Joseph Smith and (b) that he did see the Father and the Son. With that firmly in place, it logically follows that one can receive a verification that the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are true companion scriptures to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

All of this confirms the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the divine mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, led by a living prophet enjoying continuous revelation. From these basic verities can flow an understanding of other saving principles of the fulness of the gospel.

In addition, the Book of Mormon is a necessary keystone of our own individual faith. President Ezra Taft Benson affirmed, "I have noted within the Church the difference in discernment, in insight, conviction, and spirit between those who know and love the Book of Mormon and those who do not. That book is a great sifter" (*New Era*, May 1975, p. 19). An understanding of the Book of Mormon can really help lock into place an individual's faith in Jesus Christ.

What Book of Mormon is not

It is important to know what the Book of Mormon is *not*. It is not primarily a history, although much of what it contains is historical. The title page states that it is an account taken from the records of people living in the Americas before and after Christ. It was "written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. . . . And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

George Q. Cannon stated that "the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths. What is told us of the situation of the various lands or cities . . . is usually simply an incidental remark connected with the doctrinal or historical portions of the work" (*Juvenile Instructor*, Jan. 1890, p. 18).

Confirming evidence of Jesus

What, then, is the Book of Mormon? It is confirming evidence of the birth, life, and crucifixion of Jesus and of his work as the Messiah and the Redeemer. Nephi writes about the Book of Mormon: "All ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 33:10).

Nephi and his brother Jacob join with Isaiah to constitute three powerful pre-Messianic voices proclaiming the first coming of Jesus. Isaiah is quoted extensively by Nephi because he is the principal Old Testament prophet who prophesied of the coming of the Messiah.

To bring us unto Christ

The Book of Mormon establishes the truthfulness of the Bible. (See 1 Nephi 13:40.) It is evidence "to the world that the holy scriptures are true" (D&C 20:11). It foretells the establishment of the fulness of the gospel of peace and salvation. It was written to give us principles and guidelines for our eternal journey.

One of the ultimate messages of the Book of Mormon, and indeed of the Old Testament and all human history, is that mankind cannot reach perfection on its own. There is another message which comes through loud and clear from its pages. It is the often unpopular and seemingly harsh injunction—"Repent or perish." When the Book of Mormon people listened to this prophetic message, they flourished. When they forgot the message, they perished.

In Galatians Paul said, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). The records maintained by the Book of Mormon prophets—and portions of what is now the Bible brought from the eastern continent—served, according to Abinadi, "to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him" (Mosiah 13:30). So the Book of Mormon is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. (See Mosiah 13:27–32.)

Translated with aid and power of God

The test for understanding this sacred book is preeminently spiritual. An obsession with secular knowledge rather than spiritual understanding will make its pages difficult to unlock.

To me it is inconceivable that Joseph Smith, without divine help, could have written this complex and profound book. There is no way that Joseph Smith, an unlearned young frontiersman, could have fabricated the great truths it contains, generated its great spiritual power, or falsified the testimony of Christ that it contains. The book itself testifies that it is the holy word of God.

New evidence of the divinity of the Book of Mormon has just come to light. The recently discovered letter of Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, dated January 23, 1829, to her sister-in-law, Mary Pierce, is additional confirmation of the Book of Mormon. This letter was written a year before the Book of Mormon was published. It contains an accurate statement of some of the happenings of the times and the contents of the book and other historical information.

With the aid of modern computer science, a topical guide has been placed in the King James Version of the Bible, containing doctrinal cross-references to the other scriptures. From these references we find countless confirming evidences that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon with the aid and power of God. On almost every one of its 531 pages are numerous references that tie in doctrinally to the King James Bible. In comparison, many statements that seem fragmented in the Bible are more complete in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Confirmation by the Holy Spirit

References to teachings also taught in the Old Testament and the New Testament are so numerous and overwhelming throughout the Book of Mormon that one can come to a definitive conclusion by logic that a human intellect could not have conceived of them all. But more important than logic is the confirmation by the Holy Spirit that the story of the Book of Mormon is true.

All scriptures are one in that they testify of Jesus. Jacob, a Book of Mormon prophet, reminds us that "none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ" (Jacob 7:11). Speaking of the scriptures, the Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Book of Mormon will encourage only righteousness. Why, then, has hostility been engendered against the book? In part, no doubt, it may have come because the origin of the book was from golden plates delivered to Joseph Smith by an angel. These were seen and handled by selected witnesses, but not put on public display. Perhaps it is also because it is claimed primarily to be the work of ancient prophets here on the American continent.

Testimony as special witness

The great worth of the Book of Mormon was declared by the Savior himself. He said in 3 Nephi, "This is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me" (3 Nephi 11:32).

The Redeemer further declared in the Book of Mormon, "Behold I have given unto you my gospel" (3 Nephi 27:13). As a special witness, I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that Nephi's and Isaiah's prophecies of His coming have in fact been fulfilled. Like Nephi, "We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ" (2 Nephi 25:26).

I testify that the Savior will come again, and that at his second coming some will say, "What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?" He will

show the wounds in His hands, wrists, and feet, and they will ask when and where he received these wounds. He will answer: "I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God" (D&C 45:51-52).

I testify through the sure conviction that springs from the witness of the Spirit that it is possible to know things that have been revealed with greater certainty than by actually seeing them. We can have a more absolute knowledge than eyes can perceive or ears can hear. God himself has put his approval on the Book of Mormon, having said, "As your Lord and your God liveth it is true" (D&C 17:6).

I can now see more clearly through the eyes of my own understanding what my mother could see in her precious old worn-out copy of the Book of Mormon. I pray that we may live in such a way as to merit and gain a testimony of and abide by the great truths of the Book of Mormon. I testify that the keystone of our religion is solidly in place, bearing the weight of truth as it moves through all the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which we shall hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder L. Tom Perry

One of the special opportunities we have as General Authorities is to visit the stakes of Zion. Thirty to forty times each year we find ourselves stay-

ing in the home of a different stake president. We have the privilege of being guests in the greatest homes you will find in all the world.

Strength in family unit

Let me tell you about one of my recent experiences. I was assigned to a stake conference to release the stake president, who had served for many, many years. It was a difficult stake to administer. The stake had been losing population. It was located near one of our major city centers. Industry had moved in. With the growth of industry, many of the members had moved out to the more suburban areas. Because of his assignment, he had stayed in the area to shepherd the flock. He had not found it to be a hopeless situation. Through his energy, effort, and great enthusiasm, the stake started to grow once again.

As the weekend progressed, his children came by auto and air, returning home to pay tribute to their father for his years of faithful service. I found a special spirit in this home. They were a very close family. How they enjoyed being together!

As I stood to address the conference in its final session, there seated to my left sat his entire family, tears streaming down their faces as they honored their father on this grand occasion.

Following the conference session, I had been invited to stay for family dinner before leaving for the airport to fly home. As the family gathered around the table, the father requested that we kneel in family prayer. Kneeling in prayer, I discovered their strength. This family understood their relationship to God, their Eternal Father. They understood their relationship to their earthly father and mother, to their brothers and sisters. The brotherhood and sisterhood existing in this family unit made it easy for them to stretch beyond their borders to friends and neighbors.

Duty and privilege to teach prayer

Being a guest in so many different homes over the last few years has certainly convinced me that a special spirit is clearly evident when a family prays together.

Our prophets have admonished us repeatedly to make family prayer a regular part of our daily worship. President John Taylor asked the Saints:

"Do you have prayers in your family? . . .

"And when you do, do you go through the operation like the guiding of a piece of machinery, or do you bow in meekness and with a sincere desire to seek the blessing of God upon you and your household? That is the way that we ought to do, and cultivate a spirit of devotion and trust in God, dedicating ourselves to him, and seeking his blessings" (*Journal of Discourses*, 21:118).

President Heber J. Grant, in referring to this matter, said:

"I have little or no fear for the boy or the girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His Spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them" (*Gospel Standards* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], p. 26).

It is clearly our duty and privilege as parents to teach our children to pray, and regular family prayer sets the pattern.

Divine fellowship with God

Prayer is a divine fellowship with God. Such spiritual companionship brings a matchless blessing. I believe families who pray together understand the meaning and comfort the Savior was trying to give to His believers, as He offered His inspiring prayer as His earthly ministry was coming to an end.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . .

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:15-18, 20-21).

Draw near to our Father

President Heber J. Grant once counseled us:

"The minute a man stops supplicating God for his spirit and direction, just so soon he starts out to become a stranger to him and his works. When men stop praying for God's spirit, they place confidence in their own unaided reason, and they gradually lose the spirit of God, just the same as near and dear friends, by never writing to or visiting with each other, will become strangers" (*Improvement Era*, Aug. 1944, p. 481).

Prayer endows us with the power to draw near to our Eternal Father. How important it is, then, that one of our fundamental teachings to our children is how to pray.

How to address the Lord

Could I encourage you to consider the subject of prayer in your discussions as you hold family home evenings? Could I direct your teaching of prayer to at least four main areas of emphasis?

First, the way we address our Father in Heaven in prayer. I listen to so many people offering prayers, and I wonder who they are addressing. The salutation is so complicated I find it difficult to comprehend the being to which the prayer is being directed. I am reminded of the occasion when the first Congress was trying to determine how to address the president of our country. The suggestion was given that he could be called "His Highness, President of the United States and Protector of the Liberties of the Same." Washington's request was to just call him Mr. Presi-

dent. (Willis M. and Ruth West, *The American People* [Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1948].)

When the Lord instructed His disciples on how to pray, He said:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. . . .

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:5, 9).

In the words of other prayers given to us by the Savior, the term *Father* is also used. "O God, the Eternal Father" is the way the Lord instructed us to bless the sacrament. (See D&C 20:77.) By use of the word *Father*, we understand our relationship to Him. He is our Eternal Father, and we are His children. Teach your children how to address the Lord in prayer.

Language of prayer

Second, use the sacred language of prayer. We should always address Deity by using the sacred pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine*. The late President Stephen L. Richards gave us this wise counsel:

"We have discovered . . . a lack of proper teaching with reference to prayer. I know that I myself have been shocked out in the mission field as I have heard missionaries called on for prayer who seem to have had no experience or training whatever in the use of the language of prayer. . . .

"I think, my brethren, that in the quorums and in the classes, you would do well, as in the homes also, to teach the language of prayer—'Thee and Thou,' rather than 'you.' It always seems disappointing to me to have our Father in Heaven, our Lord, addressed as 'you.' It is surprising how much we see of this. . . . I think you might make note of it, and avail yourselves of any opportunities that may come in order to

teach the sacred and reverential language of prayer" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, p. 175).

Let us teach our children to use the language of prayer.

Gratitude to the Lord

Third, offer prayers of gratitude. I was requested to bless a lad who was having problems in his young life a few weeks ago. After the blessing, as I prepared to leave, his mother said to him, "Son, thank him for the blessing before he leaves." Instead of turning to me, he lowered his head, folded his arms, and thanked his Father in Heaven. How perceptive children are!

As I have opportunity of kneeling each night and morning with my wife in prayer, I am full of gratitude for the blessing and privilege of having her companionship. I am full of gratitude for the blessings that come to me through my children and their lives as I am able to be with them and watch their growth and progress.

When you are on your knees in prayer, there is an overwhelming feeling of gratitude to the Lord for the many blessings that he bestows on his children.

How blessed we are for our understanding of who He is. How blessed we are as a people for the gift of the gospel. I marvel at what He has created for our use and benefit and for the privilege of enjoying this earthly experience. My heart is especially filled with gratitude at this season of the harvest when I go out to dig a hill of potatoes and there find manyfold over the small piece I planted a few months before, or pull off an ear of corn and see how those two or three kernels placed in the earth now yield a hundredfold. As I travel and see the beauty of His creations—the mountains, the fertile plains, the sparkling streams, or the mighty oceans—how grateful I am for His blessings to me. When we kneel in family prayer, let us teach our children to express gratitude unto the Lord for His many blessings to us.

What to pray for

Fourth, our petitions unto the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith at one time stated:

"We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the direction of the Book of Mormon, and pray over and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in" (*History of the Church*, 5:31).

President Brigham Young once counseled us:

"Again, suppose a family wish to assemble for prayer, what would be orderly and proper? For the head of the family to call together his wife . . . and children, . . . and when he prays aloud, all present, who are old enough to understand, should mentally repeat the words as they fall from his lips; and why so? That all may be one.

"If the people will ask in faith, they will receive, and let all mentally ask precisely as does the one who is spokesman. Let all leave the cares of their work behind them; let the kitchens take care of themselves, and let the barns, the flocks and herds take care of themselves, and if they are destroyed while you are praying, be able to freely say, 'Go, they are the Lord's; He gave them to me, and I will worship Him; I will assemble my family and call upon the name of my God.'

"By leaving business and the cares thereof where they belong, and attending strictly to worship in its season, if not at first, you soon will be united, and be able to bring every evil principle into subjection. If all are bound up in this manner, don't you see that it will make a mighty cord of faith?" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:53).

Let us teach our children to pray for courage, for opportunity, for comfort, for peace, for understanding, and not for material gifts. Let us teach them

to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Time for prayer

President Kimball has counseled us: "There will *always* be time for prayer. There will *always* be the moments of blessed solitude, of closeness to the Heavenly Father, of freedom from worldly things and cares.

"When we kneel in family prayer, our children at our side on their knees are learning habits that will stay with them all through their lives. If we do not take time for prayers, what we are actually saying to our children is, 'Well, it isn't very important, anyway. We won't worry about it. If we can do it conveniently, we will have our prayer, but if the school bell rings and the bus is coming and employment is calling—well, prayer isn't very important and we will do it when it is convenient.' Unless planned for, it never seems to be convenient. On the other hand, what a joyous thing it is to establish such customs and habits in the home that when parents visit their children in the latter's homes after they are married they just naturally kneel with them in the usual, established manner of prayer!" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 253).

Teaching prayer by example

I am grateful for my children, who are teaching my grandchildren the blessings of prayer. I believe the first

word I heard from Terry, Esther, Audrey, and Thomas's lips has been *Amen*, oftentimes repeated with great gusto and enthusiasm. This has been followed by *Father in Heaven*. The beginning of their parents' earthly instruction has been to teach them who they are and how they can communicate with their Eternal Father. I am certain the same practice will be followed for Benjamin, Michael, and Justin, just as they are old enough to also learn how to approach their Father in Heaven in prayer.

I can think of no greater teaching to our children than that of the power of prayer. We should do it by example, and take our children daily before the Lord and give them the peace and assurance that can come from knowing they are a child of our Father in Heaven.

May we, this day, commit ourselves to so live that we will go before the Lord with a clear conscience and ask for His divine guidance and assistance and express our gratitude unto Him for the blessings He has given to us.

May the power of prayer bless our homes, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

Parent-child interviews

Several years ago, I approached one of my daughters and said, "My dear, it's time for an interview." Her

response was less than enthusiastic, and I determined within my own mind that I was boring her terribly. So instead of subjecting her to a formal conversation, I invited her into the car and drove to the Dairy Queen where we

both enjoyed a root beer float. All the way to and from the store, I asked questions, and she freely responded. She didn't even realize that she was being interviewed—or at least that is what I thought. A few weeks later, I announced once again that I wanted to interview her. This time she promptly asked, "Wet or dry?"

Dry interviews

I wonder if our conduct of good practices—even the conducting of interviews with our children—is sometimes done in a dry and deadening manner. Is it possible that in our drive to perform or fulfill a Church expectancy we collide with purpose? Can we not become so obsessed with form that we forget family? If so, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether within we are "full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27).

When I think of dry performances, my mind turns to the ancients who altered the lesser law. They multiplied rituals, ceremonies, and symbols to the extent that the law itself was worshiped more than the Lord. In fact, the law was so abused that it pointed people away from, not forward to, the Messiah.

Wet interviews

The acceptable performance, I feel, is made "wet" and given zest by the living waters which issue from Christ. It is a performance founded upon inspired teachings such as:

"[You] must have no other object in view . . . but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom" (Joseph Smith—History 1:46).

"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3).

Questioning a son's beliefs

Living performances are void of roteness and stiffness and self-centered tendencies. They are made by Saints who speak and act according to the feelings of their hearts and the Spirit of the Lord which is in them. (See 2 Nephi 4:12.)

Alma's interview with Helaman is a classic "wet" and refreshing performance. It is a short, three-question, forty-five-second exchange between father and son. According to the record, Alma was approaching the end of his ministry. He knew that he must select someone to assume prophetic and record-keeping responsibilities. Helaman was his choice. Therefore, Alma came to his son and asked: "Believest thou the words which I spake unto thee concerning those records which have been kept?"

Without hesitation, Helaman answered: "Yea, I believe." He might have said, "Yes, I believe in the scriptures; and yes, I believe all that you have taught me."

Alma's second question was simply: "Believest thou in Jesus Christ, who shall come?" Again, without delay, Helaman stated: "Yea, I believe all the words which thou hast spoken." (See Alma 45:2–5.)

What a tribute to the father! He had talked of Christ, rejoiced in Christ, preached of Christ, and taught his son to know the source to which he might look for a remission of his sins. (See 2 Nephi 25:26.)

Faith and devotion

Up to this point in the interview, the father's questions were sampling the son's basic beliefs. Now it was essential that those beliefs be tested and determined as being more than idle lip service. Alma's capstone inquiry was, "Will ye keep my commandments?"

I am not certain what went through Helaman's mind as he prepared to give his final response. He knew the necessity of honoring his parents and respect-

ing priesthood authority. His previous actions had verified this fact. I like to think that Helaman's reply was promoted by a heartfelt desire to be obedient rather than by a fear of authority. Deep love of God and father were reflected in his words: "Yea, I will keep thy commandments with all my heart."

It is a marvelous thing when a father is able to make his commandments square perfectly with God's expectations. Apparently, this condition was achieved by Alma, for Helaman was ready and willing to obey with all his heart.

This short, informative, and inspiring interview must have pleased Alma greatly. Not only had he communicated heart-to-heart and soul-to-soul with his son, but the son had openly declared his faith and pledged his devotion. To culminate the exchange, Alma, under the inspiration of the Spirit, prophesied and extended this blessing: "Blessed art thou; and the Lord shall prosper thee in this land." (See Alma 45:6-8.)

The Alma-Helaman approach

I wonder if our interviews with our children are as inspirational and building as the one between Alma and Helaman. I find it significant that the father came to the son; the son was not summoned to stand inspection or to give a report. I find it refreshing that the conversation was direct and without any verbal sparring; it was not labored or rehearsed. I find it exemplary that commitment was drawn without prying, wringing, or pressuring. And I find it most beautiful that the father concluded with a tender blessing.

Is this not a performance, or a pattern of communicating, that we should follow? And I refer to the principles involved, not necessarily to the form.

On one occasion when I arrived home late from an assignment, my wife expressed concern about one of our sons. She was worried that his mind was not riveted upon serving a mission, and she said as much to me. Her con-

cerns certainly captured my attention, and I asked where the son was. She told me that he was in his room preparing to retire. Immediately I went to the room and sat on the edge of his bed. When I asked if I could speak with him a moment, he said, "Certainly."

The hour was late. He was tired, and so was I. I, therefore, could see that nothing would be gained by a long conversation. And following the direct Alma-and-Helaman approach, the conversation went something like this:

"Son, are you still planning on serving a mission?"

"Yes," he answered. "I've always planned on serving, and I haven't changed."

"Son, do you know what qualifies a young man to serve a mission? Do you know what *worthiness* means?"

"Yes, Dad," he said. "I understand the requirements and standards of worthiness that must be met."

I said, "Thank you. I have one last question: Are you clean and worthy to serve? Could you accept a call if one were issued you today?"

There was a moment of reflective silence; then he declared: "It isn't easy. Temptation is real and found everywhere. However, since you've asked, I am clean and I am worthy to serve."

This was a wonderful, beautiful, spontaneous, and sanctifying experience.

I thanked my son, kissed him, assured him of my love, and bid him good night. I returned to my bedroom and told my wife that all was well and that she could go to sleep.

Means and ends

I do see great wisdom in the practices and performances which we encourage parents to follow in the Church. There is virtue in sponsoring family home evenings; in conducting family prayers, as Elder Perry has mentioned; in giving father's blessings; and in holding parent-child interviews. All of these are important and have their place. However, the participation in

such performances and the reporting of such activity must not become the end. They are means of involving, means of teaching, and means of blessing people. All should be engaged in for the purpose of saving and exalting souls.

I thank God for my wife and my children; they make life so very meaningful. I thank God for the restored Church and living prophets who have provided me inspired programs for the benefit of those around me. And I'm grateful for the gospel which comes from the fountain of living waters—even Jesus Christ. But I pray humbly that I will be blessed not to confuse means and ends or become confused with performances at the expense of the spirit underlying all commandments. May our interviews, our prayers, our communications with our children be

sanctifying and free of dryness and "dead men's bones," I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise Ye the Father" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has spoken to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang so magnificently "Praise Ye the Father."

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us, and he will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

A lesson

I want to tell you of an incident that happened many years ago. Two of our sons, then little boys, were wrestling on the rug, and they had reached that line which separates laughter from tears. So I worked my foot carefully between them and lifted the older one back to a sitting position on the rug. As I did so, I said, "Hey there, you little monkeys. You'd better settle down."

To my surprise he folded his little arms, his eyes swimming with deep hurt, and protested, "I *not* a monkey, Daddy, I a *person*!"

The years have not erased the overwhelming feeling of love I felt for my little sons. I was taught a profound lesson by my little boys. Many times over the years his words have slipped back into my mind, "I *not* a monkey, Daddy, I a *person*!" I was taught a profound lesson by my little boy.

The mystery of life

Now the cycle of life has moved swiftly on, and both of those sons have little boys of their own, who teach their fathers lessons. They now watch their children grow as we watched them. They are coming to know something as fathers that they could not be taught as sons. Perhaps now they know how much their father loves them. Hopefully, they know as well why prayers begin "Our *Father* who art in heaven."

All too soon their children will be grown with little "persons" of their own, repeating the endless cycle of life.

There is on the West Coast a statue by Ernesto Gazzeri which depicts in marble that cycle of life. There are toddlers and children, teenagers, young lovers, the mature and the aged, gazing at a newborn baby. Two figures to the back, however, face away from the group. An aged couple, supporting one another, haltingly moves away from the family circle.

Persons enter life through mortal birth and, in due time, disappear through the veil of death. Most of them never sense why we are here.

Nothing is more obvious than what the statue represents, but the sculptor entitled it *The Mystery of Life*.

Unanswered questions

Occasionally, as at the time of birth, we pause in awe of what nature has to say. We see patterns of creation, so ordered and so beautiful as to sponsor deep feelings of reverence and humility. Then, just when we might discover the meaning of life, we are jerked back by the wild, uncontrolled things that humanity is doing to itself.

There are so many unanswered questions. Why the inequities in life?

Some are so rich.

Some so wretchedly poor.

Some so beautifully formed, and others with pitiful handicaps.

Some are gifted and others retarded.

Why the injustice, the untimely death? Why the neglect, the sorrow, the pain?

Why divorce, incest, perversion, abuse, and cruelty?

If there be order and meaning to life, they are hardly visible in what mortals do to one another and to themselves.

Answers to deep questions

In counterpoint, we see love and devotion, sacrifice, faith, and humility; we see humanity in exalted expression of courage and heroism.

When at last the mystery of life is unraveled, what will be revealed?

I know a man who studied for the ministry. Then just before his ordination he dropped out because there were so many unanswered questions. He still regarded himself as a devout, if somewhat disillusioned, Christian. He found another profession, married, and was raising a family when our missionaries found him.

He made a very superficial study of the doctrines of the Church and found them tolerable enough. The fundamentals of Christianity were visible. But he was most interested in programs and activities that would benefit his family.

It was *after* he was baptized that he made the discovery of his life. To his surprise he found, underlying the programs of the Church, a solid foundation of doctrine. He had no idea of the depth and breadth and height of our theology. When once he moved from interest in the programs to a study of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he found answers which explained to his full satisfaction the deep questions that had left him unable to accept ordination as a clergyman.

One doctrine was completely new to him. Although he was a student of the Bible, he had not found it there until he read the other revelations. Then the Bible was clear to him and he understood.

The doctrine is so logical, so reasonable, and explains so many things, that it is a wonder that the Christian world rejected it. It is so essential a part of the equation of life that, left out, life just cannot add up, it remains a mystery.

The doctrine is simply this: life did not begin with mortal birth. We lived in spirit form before we entered mortality. We are spiritually the children of God.

This doctrine of premortal life was known to ancient Christians. For nearly five hundred years the doctrine was taught, but it was then rejected as a heresy by a clergy that had slipped into the Dark Ages of apostasy.

Once they rejected this doctrine, the doctrine of premortal life, and the doctrine of redemption for the dead, they could never unravel the mystery of life. They became like a man trying to assemble a strand of pearls on a string that was too short. There is no way they can put them all together.

Sacred things hidden from the insincere

Why is it so strange a thought that we lived as spirits before entering mortality? Christian doctrine proclaims the Resurrection, meaning that we will live after mortal death. If we live beyond death, why should it be strange that we lived before birth?

The Christian world in general accepts the idea that our condition in the Resurrection will be determined by our actions in this life. Why can they not believe that some circumstances in this life were determined by our actions before coming into mortality?

The scriptures teach this doctrine, the doctrine of premortal life. For His own reasons, the Lord provides answers to some questions, with pieces placed here and there throughout the scriptures. We are to find them; we are to *earn* them. In that way sacred things are hidden from the insincere.

Children of God

Of the many verses revealing this doctrine, I will quote two short phrases from the testimony of John in the ninety-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The first, speaking of Christ, says plainly, "He was in the beginning, before the world was" (D&C 93:7).

And the other, referring to us, says with equal clarity, "Ye were also in the beginning with the Father" (D&C 93:23).

Essential facts about our premortal life have been revealed. Although they are sketchy, they unravel the mystery of life.

When we comprehend the doctrine of premortal life, we know that we are the children of God, that we lived with him in spirit form before entering mortality.

We know that this life is a test, that life did not begin with birth, nor will it end with death.

Imaginary football battle

Then life begins to make sense, with meaning and purpose even in all of the chaotic mischief that mankind creates for itself.

Imagine that you are attending a football game. The teams seem evenly matched. One team has been trained to follow the rules; the other, to do just the opposite. They are committed to cheat and disobey every rule of sportsmanlike conduct.

While the game ends in a tie, it is determined that it must continue until one side wins decisively.

Soon the field is a quagmire.

Players on both sides are being ground into the mud. The cheating of the opposing team turns to brutality.

Players are carried off the field. Some have been injured critically; others, it is whispered, fatally. It ceases to be a game and becomes a battle.

You become very frustrated and upset. "Why let this go on? Neither team can win. It must be stopped."

Imagine that you confront the sponsor of the game and demand that he stop this useless, futile battle. You say it is senseless and without purpose. Has he no regard at all for the players?

He calmly replies that he will not call the game. You are mistaken. There is a great purpose in it. You have not understood.

He tells you that this is not a spectator sport—it is for the participants. It is for their sake that he permits the game to continue. Great benefit may come to them because of the challenges they face.

He points to players sitting on the bench, suited up, eager to enter the game. "When each one of them has been in, when each has met the day for which we has prepared so long and trained so hard, then, and only then, will I call the game."

The test and the purpose

Until then, it may not matter which team seems to be ahead. The

present score is really not crucial. There are games within games, you know. Whatever is happening to the team, each player will have his day.

Those players on the team that keeps the rules will not be eternally disadvantaged by the appearance that their team somehow always seems to be losing.

In the field of destiny, no team or player will be eternally disadvantaged because they keep the rules. They may be cornered or misused, even defeated for a time. But individual players on that team, regardless of what appears on the scoreboard, may already be victorious.

Each player will have a test sufficient to his needs; how each responds is the test.

When the game is finally over, you and they will see purpose in it all, may even express gratitude for having been on the field during the darkest part of the contest.

Testing can have opposite effects

I do not think the Lord is quite so hopeless about what's going on in the world as we are. He could put a stop to all of it any moment. But He will not! Not until every player has a chance to meet the test for which we were preparing before the world was, before we came into mortality.

The same testing in troubled times can have quite opposite effects on individuals. Three verses from the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Christ, teach us that "they had wars, and bloodsheds, and famine, and affliction, for the space of many years.

"And there had been murders, and contentions, and dissensions, and all manner of iniquity among the people of Nephi; nevertheless for the righteous' sake, yea, because of the prayers of the righteous, they were spared.

"But behold, because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites many had become *hardened*, because

of the exceedingly great length of the war; and many were *softened* because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility" (Alma 62:39-41; italics added).

Surely you know some whose lives have been filled with adversity who have been mellowed and strengthened and refined by it, while others have come away from the same test bitter and blistered and unhappy.

Doctrine of premortal life

There is no way to make sense out of life without a knowledge of the doctrine of premortal life.

The idea that mortal birth is the beginning is preposterous. There is no way to explain life if you believe that.

The notion that life ends with mortal death is ridiculous. There is no way to face life if you believe that.

When we understand the doctrine of premortal life, then things fit together and make sense. We then know that little boys and little girls are not monkeys, nor are their parents, nor were theirs, to the very beginning generation.

We are the children of God, created in his image.

Our child-parent relationship to God is clear.

The purpose for the creation of this earth is clear.

The testing that comes in mortality is clear.

The need for a redeemer is clear.

When we do understand that principle of the gospel, we see a Heavenly Father and a Son; we see an atonement and a redemption.

We understand why ordinances and covenants are necessary.

We understand the necessity for baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. We understand why we renew that covenant by partaking of the sacrament.

Cause to rejoice

I have but touched upon the doctrine of premortal life. We cannot, in these brief conference talks, do more than that. Oh, if we but had a day, or even an hour, to speak of it.

I assure you there is, underlying the programs and activities of this church, a depth and breadth and height of doctrine that answers the questions of life.

When one knows the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is cause to rejoice. The words *joy* and *rejoice* appear through the scriptures repetitively. Latter-day Saints are happy people. When one knows the doctrine, parenthood becomes a sacred obligation, the begetting of life a sacred privilege. Abortion would be unthinkable. No one would think of suicide. And all the frailties and problems of men would fade away.

We have cause to rejoice and we do rejoice, even celebrate.

"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36).

God bless us that we and all who will hear His message can celebrate the Light! Of Him I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "As the Dew from Heaven Distilling" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. The Tabernacle Choir has sung "As the Dew from Heaven Distilling."

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord."

The benediction will then be given by Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, after which the conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Hear Thou Our Hymn, O Lord." Bishop J. Richard Clarke offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1983. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We deeply regret the absence of President Spencer W. Kimball and President Marion G. Romney, to whom we extend our love and blessings.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio, and also the many who are watching in over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States (including Alaska) and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We note that Elders Dean L. Larsen and Ronald E. Poelman are presiding at the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Robert C. Bowden with Roy Darley at the organ.

The chorus will begin this service by singing "I Need Thee Every Hour." The invocation will be offered by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the invocation.

President Benson

The chorus will now sing "O Divine Redeemer," following which Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "O Divine Redeemer."

Elder Thomas S. Monson

The National Gallery at Trafalgar Square in London, England, is one of the truly great museums of art in all the world. The gallery proudly proclaims its Rembrandt Room and Constable Corner and urges all to take the tour of Turner's masterpieces. Visitors come from every corner of the earth. They depart uplifted and inspired.

Labels on paintings

During a recent visit to the National Gallery, I was surprised to see displayed in a most prominent location magnificent portraits and landscapes which featured the name of no artist.

Then I noticed a large placard which provided this explanation:

"This exhibition is drawn from the large number of paintings that hang in a public but somewhat neglected area of the Gallery: the lower floor. The exhibition is intended to encourage visitors to look at the paintings without being too worried about who painted them. In several instances, we do not precisely know.

"The information on labels on paintings can often affect, half-unconsciously, our estimate of them; and here labeling has been deliberately subordinate in the hope that visitors will read only after they have looked

and made their own assessment of each work."

"Destined for immortal glory"

Like the labels on paintings are the outward appearances of some men—often misleading. The Master declared to one group: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. . . .

"Ye . . . outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28).

Then there are those who may outwardly appear impoverished, without talent, and doomed to mediocrity. A classic label appeared beneath a picture of the boy Abraham Lincoln as he stood in front of his humble birthplace—a simple log cabin. The words read: "Ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-fed." Unanticipated, unspoken, and unprinted was the real label of the boy: "Destined for immortal glory."

As the poet expressed:

Nobody knows what a boy is worth,
We'll have to wait and see.
But every man in a noble place,
A boy once used to be.

The prophet Samuel

At another time, and in a distant place, the boy Samuel must have appeared like any lad his age as he ministered unto the Lord before Eli. As Samuel lay down to sleep and heard the voice of the Lord calling him, Samuel mistakenly thought it was aged Eli calling and responded, "Here am I" (1 Samuel 3:4). However, after Eli had listened to the boy's account and told him it was of the Lord, Samuel followed Eli's counsel and subsequently responded to the Lord's call with the memorable reply, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:10). The

record then reveals that "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him. . . .

"And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:19-20).

The promised Messiah

The years rolled by, as they relentlessly do, and prophecy came to fulfillment when a lowly manger cradled a newborn child. No label could describe this event. With the birth of the babe in Bethlehem, there emerged a great endowment, a power stronger than weapons, a wealth more lasting than the coins of Caesar. This child, born in such primitive circumstances, was to be the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15), the promised Messiah—even Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As a boy, Jesus was found in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." And when Joseph and His mother saw him, "they were amazed." (See Luke 2:46-48.) To the learned doctors in the temple, the boy's outward label may have conveyed brightness of intellect but certainly not "Son of God and future Redeemer of all mankind."

The Messianic words of the prophet Isaiah convey a special meaning: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). Such was the foretold description of our Lord.

The label of a traitor

Matthew records the apparent necessity of that wicked multitude of sinners who would seek after the life of the Lord to conspire with the betrayer Judas, that he might point out to them who of the apostolic group was the Jesus whom they sought. These chill-

ing verses from sacred writ torment the reader: "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

"And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

"And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him" (Matthew 26:48-50).

The label of a traitor's kiss had identified the Master. Judas now wore his own label of inescapable shame and revulsion.

A changed attitude

Sometimes cities and nations bear special labels of identity. Such was a cold and very old city in eastern Canada. The missionaries called it "Stony Kingston." There had been but one convert to the Church in six years, even though missionaries had been continuously assigned there during the entire interval. No one baptized in Kingston. Just ask any missionary who labored there. Time in Kingston was marked on the calendar like days in prison. A missionary transfer to another place—any place—would be uppermost in thoughts, even in dreams.

While I was praying about and pondering this sad dilemma, for my responsibility then as a mission president required that I pray and ponder about such things, my wife called to my attention an excerpt from the book, *A Child's Story of the Prophet Brigham Young*, by Deta Petersen Neeley (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1959, p. 36). She read aloud that Brigham Young entered Kingston, Ontario, on a cold and snow-filled day. He labored there about thirty days and baptized forty-five souls. Here was the answer. If the missionary Brigham Young could accomplish this harvest, so could the missionaries of today.

Without providing an explanation, I withdrew the missionaries from Kingston, that the cycle of defeat might be broken. Then the carefully circu-

lated word: "Soon a new city will be opened for missionary work, even the city where Brigham Young proselyted and baptized forty-five persons in thirty days." The missionaries speculated as to the location. Their weekly letters pleaded for the assignment to this Shangri-la. More time passed. Then four carefully selected missionaries—two of them new, two of them experienced—were chosen for this high adventure. The members of the small branch pledged their support. The missionaries pledged their lives. The Lord honored both.

In the space of three months, Kingston became the most productive city of the Canadian Mission. The grey limestone buildings still stood, the city had not altered its appearance, the population remained constant. The change was one of attitude. The label of doubt yielded to the label of faith.

President Gustav Wacker

The branch president of the Kingston Branch of the Church wore his own identifying label. Gustav Wacker was from the old country. He spoke English with a thick accent. He never owned or drove a car. He plied the trade of a barber. The highlight of his day would be when he had the privilege of cutting the hair of a missionary. Never would there be a charge. Indeed, he would reach deep into his pockets and give the missionaries all of his tips for the day. If it were raining, as it often does in Kingston, President Wacker would call a taxi and send the missionaries to their apartment by taxi, while he himself, at day's end, would lock the small shop and walk home—in the driving rain.

I first met Gustav Wacker when I noticed that his tithing paid was far in excess of that expected from his potential income. My efforts to explain that the Lord required no more than ten percent as tithing fell on attentive but unconvinced ears. He simply responded that he loved to pay all he could to the Lord. It amounted to about half his in-

come. His dear wife felt exactly as he did. Their unique manner of tithing payment continued throughout their earning lives.

Gustav and Margarete Wacker established a home that was a heaven. They were not blessed with children but mothered and fathered their many Church visitors. A sophisticated and learned leader from Ottawa told me, "I like to visit President Wacker. I come away refreshed in spirit and determined to ever live close to the Lord."

Did our Heavenly Father honor such abiding faith? The branch prospered. The membership outgrew the rented Slovakian Hall and moved into a modern and lovely chapel of their own. President and Sister Wacker had their prayers answered by serving a proselyting mission to their native Germany and later a temple mission to the beautiful temple in Washington, D.C. Then, just three months ago, his mission in mortality concluded, Gustav Wacker passed away peacefully while being held in the loving arms of his eternal companion. Only one label appears fitting for such an obedient and faithful servant: "Who honors God, God honors." (See 1 Samuel 2:30.)

"The Lord looketh on the heart"

A label frequently seen and grudgingly borne is one which reads: "Handicapped."

Years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball shared with President Gordon B. Hinckley, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, and me an experience he had in the appointment of a patriarch for the Shreveport Louisiana Stake of the Church. President Kimball described how he interviewed, how he searched, and how he prayed, that he might learn the Lord's will concerning the selection. For some reason, none of the suggested candidates was the man for this assignment at this particular time.

The day wore on. The evening meetings began. Suddenly President Kimball turned to the stake president

and asked him to identify a particular man seated perhaps two-thirds of the way back from the front of the chapel. The stake president replied that the individual was James Womack, whereupon President Kimball said, "He is the man the Lord has selected to be your stake patriarch. Please have him meet with me in the high council room following the meeting."

Stake President Charles Cagle was startled, for James Womack did not wear the label of a typical man. He had sustained terrible injuries while in combat during World War II. He lost both hands and one arm, as well as most of his eyesight and part of his hearing. Nobody had wanted to let him in law school when he returned, yet he finished third in his class at Louisiana State University. James Womack simply refused to wear the label "Handicapped."

That evening as President Kimball met with Brother Womack and informed him that the Lord had designated him to be the patriarch, there was a protracted silence in the room. Then Brother Womack said, "Brother Kimball, it is my understanding that a patriarch is to place his hands on the head of the person he blesses. As you can see, I have no hands to place on the head of anyone."

Brother Kimball, in his kind and patient manner, invited Brother Womack to make his way to the back of the chair on which Brother Kimball was seated. He then said, "Now, Brother Womack, lean forward and see if the stumps of your arms will reach the top of my head." To Brother Womack's joy, they touched Brother Kimball, and the exclamation came forth, "I can reach you! I can reach you!"

"Of course you can reach me," responded Brother Kimball. "And if you can reach me, you can reach any whom you bless. I will be the shortest person you will ever have seated before you."

President Kimball reported to us that when the name of James Womack was presented to the stake conference,

"the hands of the members shot heavenward in an enthusiastic vote of approval."

The word of the Lord to the prophet Samuel at the time David was designated to be a future king of Israel provided a fitting label for the occasion. It certainly was the thought of each faithful member: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Like a golden thread woven through the tapestry of life is the message on the label of a humble heart. It was true of the boy Samuel, it was the experience of Jesus, it was the testi-

mony of Gustav Wacker, it marked the calling of James Womack. May it ever be the label which identifies each of us: "Lord, here am I." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder Charles Didier, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

I desire to speak this morning of the value of our free agency and of the love that preserved it for us and which should motivate and direct our use of it.

Suppose civilization were about to end

Many years ago I was introduced to an idea which at first seemed only an exercise in imagination, or perhaps a peg on which to hang a story. But I have thought of it occasionally since as I have traveled the earth, often separated from family and other loved ones.

Suppose that everyone in the world received simultaneously the word that the inconceivable was about to occur: civilization as we know it was about to end.

What would happen?

Well, for one thing, the streets would be a maelstrom of frantic people trying to get to a telephone to talk with someone. Every line would be jammed and every telephone booth besieged by people trying to reach someone to say "I love you." There would be other messages also. "I'm so sorry," would be one of them, or "How foolish I have been."

God loves us and believes in us

The condition of the world about us assures us that the unthinkable could happen; but it is not of such a cataclysm that I am thinking, but of our daily walk and our everyday relationships. They who love should manifest their love while there is a chance to do so. If we are waiting for some later time, some period when all imperfections are corrected and when all frustrations pass away, we are not wise. Resentment or pride or selfishness or impatience can lead us to miss what life is meant to be, and can be, and is for those who love and serve. To postpone loving and giving until some time of perfect freedom from distress or discomfort is a great mistake; it will not happen. It is not for this world.

But we should be earnestly seeking and striving to correct and improve our own attitude and our own behavior. God has so ordained it. He loves us and believes in us and has done and will do anything he can to help us, but he will not impose on our free agency. "We love him," says the scripture, "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). He does not love us because we love him;

he loves us unconditionally. But his love does not take the course of negating or smothering our privilege to choose, or our responsibility to account for what we choose and to experience the consequences. Indeed, it is written that he weeps for the bad judgment of some of his willful and disobedient children:

"Behold these thy brethren . . . are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency" (Moses 7:32).

"And . . . the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept" (Moses 7:28).

Lucifer wanted forced salvation

We had that agency with God before this world was. In the heavenly council of which the scriptures teach, there was another plan than God's presented: Lucifer was permitted to offer his program. It is vital for us in our leadership and our relationships to remember that God so loved that he would not shield us from the perils of freedom, from the right and responsibility to choose. So deep is his love and so precious that principle that he, who was conscious of the consequences, required that we choose. Lucifer had no love in his heart, no real concept of freedom or respect for it. He had no confidence in the principle or in us. He argued for forced salvation, for imposed survival, for an agencyless round trip to the earth and back again. None would be lost, he insisted. But he seemed not to understand that none would be any wiser, either, or any stronger or more compassionate or humble or grateful or more creative, under his plan.

Still choosing

We understood before we left that premortal state that freedom is precarious, difficult. We knew that to love would make us vulnerable to heart-

break and pain and disappointment. But we had learned that the alternatives to love and freedom of choice cannot provide the climate for growth and creative capacity that can eventually lead us to a stewardship like our Father's. The unselfish love of our Father's First-born in the spirit helped us understand when he, knowing the personal cost ahead for him but also the eternal significance for all of us, volunteered for his role of redemption.

We chose then, and we are, in consequence, on this earth still choosing.

"He died for me"

Recently I listened to a lovely young lady just leaving her teens as she spoke in a stake conference, her first address ever. She had never known a true family of her own. She had experienced many temporary homes, made many mistakes, had much heartache and hopelessness. Then an older Church couple found her, and loved her, and taught her. Her prepared talk was witty and interesting, but when she laid it down and bore witness through tears, it became magic:

"No one ever helped me to understand that I was worth anything," she said, "that I was special in any way. And then the missionaries taught me about Jesus Christ and his love and the God who sent him. They taught me that Jesus died for me—for *me*. I am valuable! I am valuable! He died for me."

Godly love and free agency

The lesson of God's great love and wisdom seems lost on many who are on this earth because of their choice but we do not understand. Our responsibility is to help them. But we must ourselves pray and strive earnestly that we do not obscure its meaning. If we do not really love and really believe in free agency, we may be inclined to impose our will on others for what we think is their best good. If we love enough, we will not do that, even at the risk of failure. Instruction and rules and training and disci-

pline are essential, of course. From our Father's example of godly love and patience, we should be motivated to stretch to any lengths to teach, to persuade, to encourage, to help.

But in matters of conscience and faith, if we truly love we will never seek to impose our will and deprive others of their agency. That is, after all, Satan's way. He is still permitted in this world to pursue his own rebellious approach. Since his encounter with earth's first family, he has waged war unceasingly upon God's children.

A scene to give us pause is portrayed in the book of Moses:

"Satan . . . had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced."

But it is written also:

"And . . . angels descend[ed] out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many" (Moses 7:26-27).

Choose life and good

The contest for the souls of men continues. We go on choosing.

The loving Father who at such great cost has preserved our agency in and out of this world has made every effort to help us use it well, but he has made it plain where the responsibility now lies:

"I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

"In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. . . .

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:15-16, 19).

It is written that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

life" (John 3:16). That holy Son died for us and gave us the wonderful example of his life, and nothing in that life touches my heart with greater impact than the manner in which he chose to live among us:

"Forasmuch," it is written, "as the children [that is, we] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . .

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but . . . took on him the seed of Abraham.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14, 16-18).

Through that love it now is that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

God and Christ love us

He has the feeling of our infirmities; he understands our temptations. He came not as an angel but in flesh and blood that he might be a merciful and faithful advocate for us with the Father.

Would we improve our individual performance in relationship with others if we truly had the "feeling of their infirmities" and truly sought to be a faithful and merciful high priest, or Relief Society teacher, or friend, or wife, or husband?

The intensity and integrity of God's love and Christ's love are beyond our comprehension, but we are here to learn, and we must try.

Love as the heart of agency

Only Christ was sinless in this world, and this is why repentance must

always company with faith as first principles. God's plan and Christ's sacred gift prepared the way for us to improve, to grow, to change, to learn wisdom and mercy and forgiveness. Out of the wise use of our free agency proceeds every other wholesome quality and every blessing.

It is my deep conviction that any act or program or rule planned or performed without love at its heart, love as the spirit of it, or which curtails the agency of our Heavenly Father's children, is not worthy of God's kingdom or of his leaders or people.

Repeatedly He has protected our eternal agency, thus helping us to qualify through opposition and in the face of alternatives for the sweet blessing of eternal creative service. But we must choose—and be held accountable.

All of this came together for me in a very personal way a year or so ago in Manila in the Philippines when a telephone call from my wife reached me in the middle of the night in a hotel room telling me that our only son had suffered a severe accident that threatened his mobility and perhaps his life. He was being flown home to be operated on.

About the time of his anticipated arrival home, I telephoned. There was

a brief delay, then the sound of my wife's voice, quiet and subdued. "Your four sons-in-law are standing around your son administering to him," she said. "Paul has anointed him, and John is about to give him a blessing. He was worried because you're not here. This will be the first administration he's had from anyone but his father—but he's comforted now." I joined them in that prayer of blessing on my knees in a lonely hotel room half a world away, a room suddenly made sweet and warm.

Whether or not that day ever occurs in our lifetime when the telephone lines may be especially busy, we should be thinking of the love we have and should express, and manifest it for those nearest us and for those round about, and for all others, and for our holy Savior and his father.

Well may we sing, "I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Charles Didier, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Charles Didier

Friend or foe

Since the beginning of humanity, man has divided his world into two camps, friends and foes, with the purpose of gratifying his pride and ambition and exercising power, dominion, or compulsion over the other camp.

Military leaders have canonized the expression "friend or foe" and have devised different ways to quickly identify who was who. Early biblical stories tell us about this selection process. At the end of a battle, the Ephraimites

were trying to escape through the passages of the Jordan. Unfortunately, these escape routes were already occupied by their enemies, the Gileadites, who had to know who was friend or foe. They asked the fugitives: "Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay;

"Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right" (Judges 12:5-6).

And that mispronunciation meant death. Forty-two thousand perished that day. Apparently the process was

very successful and did not leave room for misunderstanding.

Love your enemies

There are not many alternatives to answer the question "Friend or foe?" It is simply one or the other. You may, of course, try to pretend to be a friend because of fear of losing your life, but the end result is almost always the same. We will see that there is an analogy between this selection process used by the natural man and the selection process of finding the potentially divine man.

Since the beginning of humanity, history has recorded that one of the deviations of man has been and still is to create artificial divisions and to fight holy wars because of racial, religious, cultural, or political differences and to justify these crimes against humanity in the name of the Lord.

Today, in our very complex world, we may well be reminded of the true message that comes from Christ himself to avoid constant battles and a final holocaust when he declared: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (3 Nephi 12:44).

Friend of world is enemy of God

However, the essential personal question that we need to consider is whether our relationship with Deity will be that of friend or foe. If well understood, because of its eternal implications, this relationship can bring eternal life; if misunderstood, misused, misapplied, misconceived, or misrepresented, it can bring mortal as well as spiritual death.

A warning is given us by James: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye

fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:1-4).

Enemy to God

What is an enemy to God? A scripture defines it concisely:

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever" (Mosiah 3:19).

One might wonder, after listening to this very strong statement, if man can abandon this carnal nature and this belief that earth is his final resource, providing food, shelter, comfort, pleasure, games, and even gods. Can he discover, by faith, that it is our Heavenly Father who constitutes the eternal resource when he knows how to cultivate this friendship?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

True friend of God

What then is a true friend of God? President David O. McKay explained the process: "That man is most truly great who is most Christlike.

"What you sincerely in your heart think of Christ will determine what you are, will largely determine what your acts will be" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, p. 93).

"By choosing [Jesus Christ] as our ideal, we create within ourselves a desire to be like him, to have fellowship with him" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, p. 98).

To become a friend of God is possible because of the Mediator, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us now consider additional teachings of the prophet Benjamin:

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, *unless* he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19; italics added).

One of the real purposes of life is to become a friend of the Mediator, our Savior and Redeemer, and not only understand his mission but also support it and then qualify to be called his friend, his disciple, and to enter into the presence of his Father.

"I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness" (D&C 93:19).

"He is our friend"

Prophets and Apostles testify of the importance of Christ being our friend. The testimony of President Spencer W. Kimball last year in general conference touched my heart when he concluded his address by testifying: "I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that He was crucified for the sins of the world. He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, and my God. With all my heart I pray that the Saints may keep His commandments, have His Spirit to be with them, and gain an eternal inheritance with Him in celestial glory" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 6).

To be able to say "He is our friend" means that we need to qualify as his friends, to have the same purposes, to be advocates and strong defenders of his cause.

David and Jonathan

We can learn a great lesson from the friendship of David and Jonathan, which was based on a covenant to be faithful to the Lord. Let me share some excerpts of the qualities of that friendship.

"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1).

"Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father" (1 Samuel 19:4).

"And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever" (1 Samuel 20:42).

Choose the right

As individuals, and especially teenagers, what kinds of friends do we select, adopt, confide in, and visit with? Are we strong enough to refuse to be a friend of the world and its representatives? Are we strong enough to accept friendship with Christ? Is to be a friend to be complacent and surrender to lower standards, or is it to maintain Christlike standards and defend them? Do we consider mutual friendship as a way to maintain and develop the foundation of our testimony of Christ? "Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things that ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3). The conditions are set; the model is given. Then why not become his disciple by being his witness? Why entertain the constant dilemma of your mind? Be committed to be his friend!

We find the same challenge with teaching our children to build an eternal association of friendship and love. "But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40). Do we treat our sons and daughters as children of God? Do we teach by example? Do we pray with them? Do we attend church with them?

Do we have family home evening regularly? Our spiritual progress and qualifying to become friends with Christ and his Father depend on how faithfully we live the gospel in our homes and how diligently we impart the teachings to our children.

"Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, . . . he being an enemy to all righteousness" (Mosiah 4:14).

Our challenge is to choose the right, to declare that we are friends of our Heavenly Father. The covenant that we made through baptism is a contract to become a friend of God.

Abraham "was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). Prophets and Apostles down through the dispensations have been friends of God. If you have not done so previously, now is the time to become friends of God. We

have the knowledge of the scriptures, the testimonies of the prophets. I know that my Redeemer lives. I want to call him my friend; I want to be called his friend. May we all qualify to be his disciples, his friends, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning," following which Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The chorus and congregation sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

Elder Paul H. Dunn

It's 3:00 P.M. in Salt Lake City. Can you just imagine the scramble that's going on in many homes, with those trying to decide which channel and station to tune in on? Being somewhat interested in sports myself, I couldn't help but think as I was sitting here about some wise counsel my father once gave. I think it's appropriate here.

"Paul," he said, "remember: one day for church, six days for fun. Odds on going to heaven—six to one."

He also made this observation. He said, "Whenever I pass our little church I like to linger for a visit, so that when I'm carried in, the Lord won't say, 'Who is it?'"

Speaking of age

One day while celebrating the birthday of one of my granddaughters, I had her sitting on my lap, as grand-

fathers do, and we were talking about age, wisdom, and experience, and all of a sudden she looked up at me and said, "Granddaddy, were you born before they invented water?" Now that's a sobering thought.

Well, speaking of age, someone else has said, "Do you know how to tell when you are getting a little older?" I said no. He said, "You know you're getting old—

- "When, after you get it all together, you realize you'd do better if you took it apart.
- "When you get a little winded while brushing your teeth.
- "When you reach the age when you know all the answers but nobody asks any of the questions.
- "When your crow's feet need orthopedic shoes.
- "When your appendix scar hits your knee.

- "When instead of Max Factor you may want to consider Kemtone.
- "While sitting in a rocking chair you have difficulty in getting it started.
- "When you get out of the shower, you're glad the mirror's fogged up.
- "When you get up in the morning and you have one shoe on and one shoe off and you can't tell whether you are getting up or going to bed."

Well, you may have some different signs, but despite our best plans and efforts, growing older is going to happen to most of us. How those mature years are spent depends on every one of us.

Older and better

To those in their golden years, age should only be hateful if it means the cessation of growth, the withering of dreams, the silencing of feelings. And these qualities, after all, have nothing to do with chronology and everything to do with heart. Douglas McArthur once observed, "Live with enthusiasm! Nobody grows old by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair."

History abounds with people who, as they got older, got better. Michelangelo didn't undertake his monumental frescoed altar wall of the Sistine Chapel until he was sixty-nine years of age. When he died at ninety, he was still busy with his poetry, paintings, and sculpture.

Goethe, German genius of literature, didn't finish the classic *Faust* until he was eighty-one. He had begun it forty years earlier, but when he came back to it, he had enhanced insight and freshness of imagination due to the extra years of life.

Herbert Hoover took on the job of coordinating the world's food supplying of thirty-eight countries at the age of seventy-two. He was the United

States representative to Belgium at the age of eighty-four.

Thomas Edison was still inventing when past ninety. Benjamin Franklin was a key political figure and a wise, insightful diplomat for America when past seventy-five.

My own mother, now past eighty-five, still paints and gardens. Her paintings are sought-after classics. Moses was over eighty when he led the Israelites. Think of the great spiritual contributions of our past prophets and those of President Kimball today.

Winston Churchill was sixty-five when he promised the British people his blood, toil, tears, and sweat during World War II. Albert Schweitzer was in his eighties when he roamed equatorial Africa tending the sick, working on his manuscripts, and playing Bach on the piano.

Each day with relish and interest

Now, you might have a tendency to say, "But these people were and are extraordinary, gifted in ways beyond the average." But I say to you, the most extraordinary talent each of these had was enthusiasm, a flair for taking each new day with relish and interest, and a refusal to let wastelands of the soul develop and choke out life. Ralph Waldo Emerson put it this way. He said, "We do not count a man's years until he has nothing else to count" (John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968], p. 609).

The elderly bless our lives

To those who have been privileged by the experience of having aging parents and grandparents with them, think of the countless ways the elderly bless our lives. Remember the admonitions of the Lord.

First from Proverbs:

"The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head" (Proverbs 20:29).

Next from Job:

"With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

"With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding" (Job 12:12-13).

And then there is this concern recorded in Psalms: "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9).

"Wake me when they come"

Many is the time in my current position when those in their advanced years have sought counsel in getting their families to share and take an interest in them. I remember reading of such an experience, which I would like to share. This item was found in an old magazine. No author's name was mentioned, just this from a heavyhearted observer. He said:

"Just next door lives a wonderful old man. He is still very alert and active. That special morning he awakened earlier than usual, bathed, shaved and put on his best clothes. Surely, he thought, they would come today.

"He didn't take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community, because he wanted to be right there when they came.

"He sat on the porch with a clear view of the road so he could see them coming. Surely they would come today.

"He decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came.

"He had six children. Two of his daughters and their married children lived within four miles. They hadn't been to see him for such a long time. But today was a special day. Surely they would come today.

"At suppertime he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with them when they came.

"About 9 o'clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out the lights were: 'Promise to wake me when they come.'

"You see, it was his birthday, and he was 91."

Three conclusions and the personal touch

In our modern age of sophistication and progress, I find it a little disturbing that the old expression "Age before beauty" seems to have been reversed. Never before has there been so much emphasis on youth and beauty. While youth and beauty are cherished attributes, age and experience can be tremendous assets.

And, while our computer-age technology has been unsurpassed at lengthening and enriching the lives of our older citizens, I'm not so sure it has replaced or improved upon the personal touch. From the scriptures I have just cited, three important conclusions can be drawn:

First, there are advantages to old age;

Second, we can learn from the wisdom and understanding that age and experience offer; and

Third, older folks are able, productive, and useful, and should not be put on a shelf.

To those who wonder if we have an obligation to bring these conclusions to pass, the Lord's answer to Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (see Genesis 4:9) is a resounding yes! He said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19).

Reach out with love

The final question, I suppose, then, ought to be: "How are we going to accomplish this?" With older friends and family, why don't you and I first—

1. Seek their counsel.
2. Visit or call on them regularly.
3. Include them in our activities.

4. Let them share their experiences.

5. See to it that they have the basic necessities of life.

6. Provide care for them when they are sick.

7. Treat them as dignified human beings, not as charity cases.

Let us take advantage of having parents, grandfathers, grandmothers, great-grandparents, friends, and neighbors around us. May we in our own special way reach out to them—not with pity, but with love. Consider again, brothers and sisters, this counsel from the Lord: “*Honour thy father and*

thy mother,” that their days—and ours—might be long upon the earth. (See Exodus 20:12; italics added.)

Finally, may we do unto the aged what we would want to have done to us. Remember: our time is coming. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

In recent months we have seen the completion and dedication of several temples in the Church—one in Atlanta, Georgia; one in Apia, Samoa; one in Nuku'alofa, Tonga; and another in Santiago, Chile. Others are now in the planning and construction stages, and of course many are in operation in various parts of the world.

Why temples

I am grateful for the special calling that I have at the present time to serve as the president of the Tokyo Temple. It is a joy and a privilege to visit with the Saints who come to that holy edifice to partake of the blessings there.

Why does the Church build and maintain temples?

This question was asked by the contractor for the Tokyo Temple when he was engaged to begin that construction about five years ago. He noted that the Buddhist and Shinto religions in Japan build many shrines and temples, but this was the first time he had heard of a Christian church building a temple. Christian religions are noted for building beautiful chapels and cathedrals, but he had never heard of a Christian temple before. Of the many churches

that profess Christianity, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only one that builds temples.

The contractor was told that the temple would be a sacred building, a holy house, where the glorious work of salvation for the living and the dead would be carried out, where baptisms for the dead and other ordinances would be performed to bring about the joining of wife to husband, children to parents, for the living as well as the dead, and where families would be sealed together for time and for all eternity.

The house of the Lord

The direction to the Prophet Joseph Smith was clear when he received this revelation on August 2, 1833, only three years after the Church was organized, instructing that a temple should be built:

“Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you.

“Yea, let it be built speedily, by the tithing of my people.

“Behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at

their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion—

“For a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices;

“That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you.

“And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

“Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

“But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples” (D&C 97:10–17).

The Kirtland Temple

There were very few members of the Church at this time, but they all greatly sacrificed, and the Kirtland Temple was completed and dedicated. The Lord appeared in glory and accepted the temple. Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared, each to commit his keys and dispensations. (See D&C 110.)

However, before the temple work could really begin in the Kirtland Temple, the Saints had to flee the attacks of mobs. The temple fell into the hands of wicked men, and, as was stated in the revelation, when it became defiled, it was disowned by the Lord. Efforts were made by the Saints to build a temple in Missouri, but again they were forced to flee for their lives.

“The fulness of the priesthood”

Again, after nearly five years, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the following revelation:

“For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.

“For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

“For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. . . .

“And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

“For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 124:28–30, 40–41).

In this revelation, which is recorded in section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, reference is made to “the fulness of the priesthood.” What is the meaning of that and how is it obtained? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 308).

President Joseph Fielding Smith further taught: “If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go to the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere. *No man shall receive*

the fulness of eternity, of exaltation, alone; no woman shall receive that blessing alone; but man and wife, when they receive the sealing power in the temple of the Lord, . . . shall pass on to exaltation, and shall continue and become like the Lord. And that is the destiny of men; that is what the Lord desires for his children" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:44).

The new and everlasting covenant

It is clear, then, that unless we go to the temple of the Lord and receive all the ordinances and obey the commandments, we cannot receive a fulness of priesthood blessings and neither can we receive exaltation. These are wonderful blessings that have been made available to us through temple work.

I have been a member of the Church most of my life. I was baptized when I was seventeen and was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood at age twenty-one. While still a young man, I served in many assignments and had many good experiences in the Church that helped me to learn many concepts that were helpful to me in building my faith and testimony. But I never felt that I had completed my *full* membership in the Church until I took my bride to the temple and received the new and everlasting covenant and the blessings and understanding of the work performed there.

Baptism for the dead

I was the first member of my family to be baptized into the Church and thus have the responsibility to perform vicariously the temple work for my ancestors who did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel during their time on this earth. I also have had the responsibility to teach my children the gospel and to instill in their hearts and minds the importance of temple work. My wife and I have four children, the

oldest of whom is married and has two children—our grandchildren, who are very special to us. Our children were born under the covenant, and our grandchildren have also been born under the covenant. The greatest gift I might give to my children or grandchildren in this life, or the most valuable legacy I might leave them, would be a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and the importance of genealogy and temple work, which binds us all together down through the generations in love and in happiness.

Importance and blessings of the work

There are many people in the world who travel great distances at great personal sacrifice to go to the temple. I know our Heavenly Father is aware of their righteous desires and blesses them abundantly for their efforts. Recently a group came to the Tokyo Temple from Okinawa—nine hundred miles by plane—among them a young couple who had come to be married. It had required all the money they could possibly save to pay for their transportation, and there was nothing left for a wedding celebration or honeymoon. When those who accompanied the couple realized their plight, they dug deep into their own pockets and contributed what little they had so the couple could have money for a delightful one-day honeymoon in Tokyo. Not only did the young couple enjoy the blessings of the temple, but they also enjoyed and appreciated the generosity and kindness of their brothers and sisters. Surely Paul's teachings to the Ephesian Saints apply, when he said, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

I have a firm and abiding testimony of the importance of this work and the blessings it can bring into our lives. I express gratitude for this testimony and for the small part I now enjoy

in teaching genealogy and temple work. May we all be blessed to receive the fulness of the blessings of the house of the Lord, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

The Angel Moroni came!

About two weeks ago we noted one of the most important anniversaries in our Church history.

It was on September 21, 1823, when the angel Moroni first appeared to the young prophet Joseph Smith in his farm home near Palmyra, New York.

As we remember it today, we declare our solemn testimony to all mankind that, indeed, *Moroni did come!* It is a fact, a firm and unshakable truth. Moroni came!

As an angel of God, a messenger from heaven, this glorious personage visited Joseph Smith in physical reality. It was no dream, nor any kind of mystic occurrence.

It was a visitation. Two physical beings communed together—with Moroni, a resurrected person of flesh and bones, emerging from the eternal veil and paying repeated and never-to-be-forgotten visits to this mortal farm boy, Joseph Smith. (See *Joseph Smith—History* 1:30–54.)

The ministry of angels!

Many people no longer believe in the ministry of angels. But God does! He has used this means of communication from the days of Adam. Is there any reason why He should not continue the procedure in our day?

Angels ministered to many people in both Old and New Testament times, delivering messages from the Lord.

Abraham walked and talked with angels. An angel assisted Israel

at the time of the Exodus. (See Exodus 14:19.) An angel fought an invading army in the days of the prophet Isaiah. (See Isaiah 37:36.) When Daniel was in the lion's den, an angel closed the mouths of the lions, and Daniel's life was spared. (See Daniel 6:22.)

The angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary in Nazareth that she would become the mother of the Savior. (See Luke 1:30–33.) The same angel told the father of John the Baptist of his prophet-son soon to be born. (See Luke 1:13.)

When Joseph and Mary and the Divine Infant fled to Egypt, it was an angel who gave them direction, and upon the death of the wicked King Herod, the angel told them to return home. (See Matthew 2:13, 19–20.)

When the Savior spoke of the sanctity of little children, he said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10; italics added).

When Jesus neared His crucifixion, He could have called twelve legions of angels to His assistance if He had wished to avoid the bitter cup. (See Matthew 26:53.) Then, are there angels? Would Jesus have spoken like that if they were nonexistent?

At His resurrection, an angel rolled the stone away from the tomb. The women saw him there and heard him speak. (See Matthew 28:2, 5.)

When Stephen bore his final testimony to his persecutors, his face shone like that of an angel. (See Acts 6:15.)

An angel released Peter from prison. (See Acts 5:19.) Paul spoke of the tongues of men and of angels. (See 1 Corinthians 13:1.)

Angel to bring the everlasting gospel

The scripture clearly teaches that the purpose of the ministry of angels is "to call men unto repentance . . . by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him" (Moroni 7:31). And that is very pertinent with regard to Moroni.

The Lord also teaches that, over the ages, if angels have ceased to appear, it is because of unbelief and the spirit of apostasy among men. But where there is faith, the ministry of angels will last as long as the earth shall stand or "there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:36).

Because the Lord desires to save mankind, even until the end, He revealed to John the Revelator that in the latter days angels would again fly through the midst of heaven as emissaries of the Almighty. John saw that one of these angels would fly from heaven to earth and would bring the everlasting gospel back to earth, it having been lost to mankind over the ages. (See Revelation 14:6.)

Moroni and the early history of America

That angel was Moroni. He had lived in America some fifteen hundred years ago and was a prophet of God at that time. He and his father, Mormon, were historians of the people who formerly inhabited this land. They wrote the history of their nation, engraving it upon plates of gold to resist the ravages of time, for that record was to have significant importance in latter days.

To preserve it in safety, Moroni encased it in a box which he made of stone and buried it in the ground. Some critics regard this as a most peculiar thing to do, but it would have been more unusual if he had not done so. Why?

Because what he did was in full harmony with a well-established custom followed by various nations in the ancient world to preserve and protect their precious documents.

Other ancient records on metal plates

Records have been engraved on metal over a period of many centuries. A number now have been recovered. Such treasures have been found from Korea to Sri Lanka, from ancient Assyria and Persia to India, from Java to Bangkok, from Italy, from Greece, and from the Qumran caves in Palestine where the Dead Sea scrolls were obtained.

Not all of these records were made on gold. Ancient peoples also wrote upon silver plates, brass plates, copper plates, lead plates, and in some instances even on tin, which proved not to be fully permanent, since it is subject to oxidation more readily than some other metals.

One of the most publicized of these discoveries was the copper scroll found with the other Dead Sea Scrolls in Palestine. It, too, contained ancient sacred writings.

King Darius, who put Daniel in the lion's den (see Daniel 6), wrote his records on gold and silver sheets and placed them in stone boxes and buried them in the ground for safekeeping, just as Moroni did. His records now have been translated and published. To make certain someone would be able to read them, Darius wrote in three different languages.

Ancient Assyria's King Sargon II had the same idea, but he used a variety of metals to make his books—gold, silver, brass, copper, and even tin. He also engraved on alabaster. He dearly

desired to preserve those records for future posterity, so what did he do? Like Darius and like Moroni, he placed them in well-made stone boxes to protect them, and buried them in the ground, in the foundation of his palace. His records, too, have been translated and published.

A book made of nineteen thin sheets of gold, found in Korea in 1965, contains part of the Buddhist scripture, engraved in Chinese. The thin pages making up this valuable record are approximately fourteen inches square, hinged together so they can open and close like a book.

The plates found in Pyrgi, Italy, in 1964 are seven and a half inches long and about half that wide, are engraved in Phoenician characters, and relate to the dedication of a shrine for the goddess Astarte. They date to about 500 B.C., about the time of Lehi.

Containers for ancient records

It is interesting that some of these ancient records were hidden away in specially constructed stone boxes such as Moroni's, some completely cut out of single stones, others cemented together in sections. A few were made of obsidian and were beautifully engraved both inside and out. They were used to contain various precious things. Larger stone boxes which have been found are known to have been used for grain storage.

In Mexico and Central America scores of stone boxes have been discovered, large and small, and some of them also are beautifully engraved with designs both inside and out.

No one need be skeptical any longer about records kept by ancient peoples who preserved their writings by engraving them on metal, nor about the stone and metal boxes in which they were stored away.

Moroni buried the records

Of course there are metal records in ancient times. Of course they were

made of gold, silver, copper, and lead! Of course many of them date to the period in which Lehi left Jerusalem, and of course this custom was carried with him to America!

The last man in the ancient line of American prophets was Moroni. He and his father, Mormon, compiled the sacred records of their own people covering a thousand years, including the account of still an earlier people, the Jaredites, who came to this continent from the Tower of Babel. The Jaredite records were engraved on twenty-four sheets of solid gold.

Following the destruction of his nation in war, and being the only survivor of the vicious battles that were fought, Moroni also made a stone box and placed in it the record made by his father and himself and buried it in the ground for safekeeping, just as did Darius, just as did Sargon. It was to remain there until such time as the Lord would decree otherwise.

Angels, Apostles, prophets, revelations

In these modern times the very mention of angels brings scoffs and scorn from some critical listeners who say that angelic ministrations are a thing of the past, if they actually ever did occur.

They assert also that there is no more revelation from heaven and that there are no more Apostles and prophets in the earth, since they belonged to the time of Peter and Paul. They teach that the Bible contains all that is needed in any case and is a sufficient guide to salvation. They forget that the scripture is subject to as many interpretations as there are different denominations and creeds in this world, and they run into the hundreds.

We declare that there is revelation today! There are Apostles and prophets on earth now! They are inspired, and they do speak the word of God. Marvelous and repeated angelic visitations have taken place in modern times as God once again established His divine

Church on earth, following a long period of darkness.

Moroni fulfilled two prophecies

Moroni fulfilled two biblical prophecies by coming to Joseph Smith. John the Revelator saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, bringing the everlasting gospel back to earth. (See Revelation 14:6-7.)

John further said that this angel would fly in the "hour of [God's] judgment" (Revelation 14:7), which could only mean the latter days. This timing made it strictly a modern affair.

He came as predicted, and Moroni was that angel. His coming opened a new dispensation of the gospel of Christ, direct from God. It had no relationship to any other religious movement. It was a new and divine episode, a modern revelation from the heavens, a fresh effort on the part of the Almighty to introduce today's nations to the gospel of His Beloved Son.

There is only one gospel of Christ. That angel, flying in midheaven, possessed it, and brought it back to earth as a divine restoration of divine truths. And we repeat—that angel was Moroni.

A prophet raised up

In what form or shape or by what method did Moroni restore the everlasting gospel? Was it through some tangible means?

Amos of old, the inspired seer of the Lord, taught that God does His work through prophets. In fact, he said that God actually will do nothing without revealing His plans to His servants the prophets. (See Amos 3:7.)

Then what would God do about the angel bringing the gospel back to earth in modern times? There were no prophets on earth to whom he could come. The world no longer even believed in them. If the Lord would do nothing—not even send His angel to earth to restore the gospel—without the services of a living prophet, how could

He accomplish His divine purpose? How could the angelic visitation predicted for the latter days be consummated if there were no prophets to receive it?

God could do only one thing, and that was to raise up a new prophet for this particular purpose, and this He did in the person of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., who lived near Palmyra, New York, in 1823. It was this young man to whom the angel Moroni came.

In what way did the angel deliver the gospel to Joseph Smith, thus restoring it to public knowledge?

The prophet Isaiah explains. In the twenty-ninth chapter of his book, he tells of an ancient record that would come out of the ground in the latter days, in a time preceding the restoration of Palestine as a fruitful field. (See Isaiah 29:17.) This record would be in the form of a book, he said, having to do with a people who had been destroyed suddenly. (See Isaiah 29:5.)

A marvelous work and a wonder

Some words of this book, Isaiah predicted, would be taken to a learned man who would reject them. Then, he said, the book itself would be given to an unlearned man, whom we now know to be Joseph Smith, who fit Isaiah's description for he had only a very meager formal education. In his hands, Isaiah said, this book would be published to the world by the miraculous power of God and would become a marvelous work and a wonder. (See Isaiah 29:11-12, 14; Joseph Smith—History 1:63-65.)

This book was that selfsame volume prepared anciently by Mormon and Moroni, containing the simple and beautiful truths of the gospel in their fulness, as taught by the ancient American prophets. It is called the Book of Mormon. It was this book that Moroni made available to the world through the services of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Thus, this record, containing the everlasting gospel, restored to man the sav-

ing truths required for salvation, which alone comes through Christ.

Moroni had hidden that record in the ground some four hundred years after Christ, and he knew exactly where to go to recover it. He had encased it in a stone box and buried it, just as did King Darius and Emperor Sargon in their days.

Having thus hidden it away, Moroni was now chosen of God to recover it and deliver it to the new modern prophet for publication. In that way he brought the gospel back to earth, for the record contained the gospel in its simplicity and in its fullness. The record was there, it was the word of God, and it came about by the act of God. It was a mighty miracle of God.

Testimony of Moroni and the Prophet Joseph Smith

So Moroni fulfilled two biblical prophecies in coming to Joseph Smith: the fourteenth chapter of Revelation and the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. He did come to earth as an angel. He did deliver to Joseph Smith the golden record which had been prepared under the direction of Almighty God. It is a new witness for the Lord Jesus Christ; it declares, as does the Bible, that Jesus of Nazareth indeed is the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. That book is available to all mankind. A million copies are published each year, in more than a score of languages.

So, again, we testify that the Book of Mormon is true. It is the word of Almighty God, restored in this day by angelic ministry and by the direction of God himself. We testify that Moroni came as an angel on September 21, 1823, revealing his ancient record and that he did so as a servant of Jesus Christ. Before its publication, he allowed twelve modern American citizens of good repute to examine the golden record so that they could bear witness of having seen or handled it.

We testify that Joseph Smith indeed was a modern prophet of God,

raised up specially for the purpose we have described.

And most solemnly we testify that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Creator. We testify further that we are His ordained servants, and we speak by the power that He restored to us and has given to us in this day. And we testify, in all solemnity, that this work in which we are engaged is verily true, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The Mormon Youth Chorus sang "O My Father" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. The Mormon Youth Chorus has favored us with two verses of that great song "O My Father." We hope and pray that we will all make it up there—to the celestial kingdom.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful for your presence here today, my young brethren and sisters, and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this choice meeting.

The chorus will now sing in closing "Praise Ye the Lord." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

The chorus sang "Praise Ye the Lord."

Bishop Victor L. Brown offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1983.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, it is a great privilege and blessing to greet you in this general priesthood meeting of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Before we commence our meeting, and while we are all tied together on the network which has been arranged for this priesthood meeting, I should repeat the announcement made a very few minutes ago that Brigham Young University defeated UCLA, score 37-35. Settle down now, and just relax and bask in the joy of that announcement, which will be a very happy announcement to members of the Church everywhere, except those members of the UCLA Institute of Religion.

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and has asked that we go forward and that I conduct this meeting.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

For the information of those in outlying areas, we announce that at the first general session this morning Elder Franklin D. Richards was released as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy because he has been called to preside over the Washington (D.C.)

Temple. Elder Richard G. Scott filled that vacancy in the Presidency of the First Quorum.

Sister Shirley W. Thomas, who has served as the second counselor in the Relief Society presidency, is assisting her husband who presides over the Australia Melbourne Mission. She was honorably released, and Sister Ann Stoddard Reese was called to replace her.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 1,153 locations in many countries around the world. They are also being carried to over six hundred stake centers by satellite transmission.

A week ago tonight, we had a similar meeting of the women of the Church assembled here in the Tabernacle, with the proceedings carried to stake centers all across this continent. I was here and, as I reflect on that, I would say that they were probably the more attractive congregation.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Derek A. Cuthbert are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Robert L. Simpson and Ted E. Brewerton preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the men's choir singing "Glory to God on High." Following the singing, Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The men's choir sang "Glory to God on High."

Elder G. Homer Durham offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered." Elder Jack H. Goaslind, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will then address us.

Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr.

The Lord's "last lecture"

A few years ago, there was a popular series of firesides called the "Last Lecture" series. Well-known LDS scholars were asked to choose a topic which to them was so important that it could be the subject of the last discourse they were ever permitted to deliver. We received some very interesting insights from the choice of topics. It has occurred to me that our Lord, after his resurrection but before his ascension, gave such a "last lecture" to his disciples. His last lecture provides a profoundly significant insight. Of all the topics from the vaults of eternal wisdom that he could have treated, he said simply, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). And the disciples "went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

It is my prayer this evening that I might comment on the Lord's last lecture, teaching you priesthood holders according to the covenants and motivating you to respond as the Lord's disciples, with faith and unrelenting commitment. I especially hope that you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood will understand the importance of what I will say, because upon you will rest

The men's choir sang "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered."

President Hinckley

I think that great anthem was written by Robert Manookin; a tremendous composition apropos the priesthood and the gathering in which we are met.

Elder Jack H. Goaslind will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Brother James M. Dunn, recently released as president of the Colombia Bogotá Mission

the major responsibility of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The salvation of souls

The life of God—the eternal, exalted life we all seek—is inherently concerned with the salvation of souls. It is the "work and . . . glory" of God to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). It is by bringing about the conditions necessary for the salvation of his children that God glorifies himself, progresses, and expands his dominions. (See D&C 132:31.)

Paul said that God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). To our Father in Heaven, "the worth of souls is great" (D&C 18:10), and "the redemption of their soul is precious" (Psalm 49:8). Therefore, God sent his Son, the Savior and Redeemer, to loose the bands of death and atone for the sins of carnal, fallen men. The Lord suffered the pain of all men that all men might come unto him on condition of repentance. (See D&C 18:11–12.)

Our call to cry repentance to all people is a direct consequence of the infinite and eternal Atonement. (See D&C 18:10–14.) It is by teaching the gospel and administering the ordinances that the Atonement becomes effective in a person's life. As Paul said, "How shall they believe in him of

whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14).

Preach the gospel

Jesus Christ himself exemplified the manner in which we fulfill this call. He announced the purpose of his ministry by quoting Isaiah in his first public discourse, given in a Nazarene synagogue.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

The conditions of our discipleship impose on us the identical mission, for he said, "The works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do" (3 Nephi 27:21). We are empowered, as necessary, to do all that the Savior did—except for the Atonement itself—in our labors to save our fellowmen. In fact, we are told that we must be "the saviors of men" or we will be "as salt that has lost its savor" (D&C 103:10).

The Lord has not left the accomplishment of this sacred labor to chance. Through sacred covenants he imposes this responsibility on all members of his kingdom, and simultaneously empowers us to fulfill these covenants. Even young children and youth have this sacred duty and also the power to do it.

Elder John A. Widtsoe taught that in our premortal state "we agreed . . . to be not only saviors for ourselves but measurably, saviors for the whole human family. . . . The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work" (*Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Oct. 1934, p. 189). We understood, as President George Albert Smith noted, that "we cannot receive the beneficent favor of our Heavenly

Father that is bestowed upon us, the knowledge of eternal life, and selfishly retain it, thinking that we may be blessed thereby. It is not what we receive that enriches our lives, it is what we give" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, p. 46). Therefore, "those who receive the message are obligated," said Elder Widtsoe, ". . . by the ageless agreement made before this world was organized . . . [to] do all in their power to bring it to the attention of others" (*Priesthood and Church Government*, rev. ed., comp. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], pp. 318-19).

These solemn premortal promises are renewed and confirmed upon us in the ordinances of salvation. In baptism, for example, we covenant to "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9). The promise is that the Lord will "pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you" (Mosiah 18:10). When partaking of the sacrament, we renew this covenant, recalling that Christ, when introducing this sacred ordinance, said, "Of me ye shall bear record unto all the world" (Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:23). Again, the promise for faithfulness is that we "may always have his Spirit to be with" us (D&C 20:77).

Again, we are "endowed with power from on high" in holy places to enable us to "go forth among all nations" (D&C 38:32-33). At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed that God's servants "may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

"And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth" (D&C 109:22-23).

By obeying the commandments and fulfilling these covenants, we are sanctified, purified, and born of the Spirit. We become vessels worthy of

receiving the Holy Spirit and the accompanying gifts of the Spirit that must attend this work if we are to succeed. The fulfilling of the commandments, as Moroni explained, "bringeth remission of sins;

"And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love" (Moroni 8:25-26).

God will hold us responsible

Love, then, is evidence of our own conversion and is manifest as concern for the salvation of others. Jacob said to the Nephites: "I am desirous for the welfare of your souls. Yea, mine anxiety is great for you" (2 Nephi 6:3). The sons of Mosiah "were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish" (Mosiah 28:3).

This love, or charity, is our greatest asset. John recognized that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18), which fear and reluctance are the greatest obstacle to our experiencing the joy of missionary service. It is also by exercising that "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) that we are able to draw upon spiritual power, because God "worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men" (Moroni 10:7).

As noted by Moroni, this perfect love comes as a direct result of having our sins remitted. It is imperative, therefore, "for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day" (Mosiah 4:26) that we administer to the needs and wants of our brothers and sisters, both temporally and spiritually.

We must realize that we have received a divine commission from God and we neglect it at the peril of our salvation. President Spencer W. Kimball said, "If we do not do our duty in regard to missionary service, then I am convinced that God will hold us

responsible for the people we might have saved had we done our duty" (*Ensign*, Oct. 1977, p. 5). This echoes Jacob's sobering doctrine: "We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day" (Jacob 1:19).

Working for the salvation of others

That is the warning. Our eternal welfare is at stake, as also is the eternal welfare of our nonmember brothers and sisters. Yet the promises for our diligence are glorious. We know that—

- Bringing souls unto the Lord is "the thing which will be of the most worth unto you" (D&C 16:6).
- By proclaiming the gospel "thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord" (D&C 81:4).
- Those who seek to bring forth Zion "shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 13:37).
- Faithful servants will be "crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life" (D&C 75:5).
- "Great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:16).

Brethren, let me state it clearly and pointedly. Working for the salvation of others is essential for our own salvation. You cannot fully magnify your calling according to the oath and covenant of the priesthood unless you are actively engaged in this work of salvation, for the priesthood is conferred on you as an instrument of service.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie once said: "This call to missionary service does not leave us any choice or option as to the course we should pursue. It is not merely a permissive invitation

which allows us to spread the gospel message on a voluntary basis, or if we find it convenient to do so. The decree is mandatory. We have no choice about it, if we are to retain the favor of God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 54).

Obligation to serve a mission

Young men, do you understand why President Spencer W. Kimball said that "every young man should fill a mission"? (*Ensign*, Oct. 1974, p. 8). It is not an option; it is your obligation to serve. And do you mature couples understand that President Kimball has made it clear that you also have this responsibility? (See *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 551.) He said, "The time is at hand to go" (*Go Ye into All the World*, text from a film produced by Brigham Young University Department of Motion Picture Production [Provo: Brigham Young University, 1974], p. 2). This service is as much for your benefit as it is for the benefit of the Church and the nonmembers who receive your message. We are grateful for the increasing numbers of young men and couples who are serving missions. We assure you that there is no more important thing you can do than prepare

for a mission by prayerfully studying the scriptures, keeping yourselves morally clean, and conducting your temporal and spiritual lives with the goal of a mission firmly in mind.

I have tried to teach you according to your covenants as members of the Church and as priesthood bearers. I urge you to prayerfully ask the Lord for a testimony of the covenant you have assumed to preach the gospel. Then, as you keep all the "covenants by which ye are bound," the Lord "will cause the heavens to shake for your good" (D&C 35:24).

I know that the responsibility and opportunity of missionary service is the most worthwhile thing we can do. The blessings must be experienced to be appreciated.

I conclude with the Prophet Joseph Smith's question: "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause?" (D&C 128:22). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Goaslind.

Brother James M. Dunn, former president of the Colombia Bogotá Mission, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Brother James M. Dunn

My dear brethren, to repeat an expression that's popular among missionaries these days, this is an "awesome" experience. I pray that the calming influence of the Spirit will be with me, that I might express my thoughts to you.

First baptism

When I left on my first mission as a young man, I had practically no understanding of missionary work. I had

a feeble testimony of the gospel, but I had faith that what I was doing was right.

Upon arrival in Montevideo, Uruguay, I was assigned to Elder Wayne G. Scheiss, my first senior companion. I immediately found that he cared for me. In our brief three months together, he taught me all I was smart enough to learn of the missionary discussions. He taught me the rudiments of the Spanish language. And he taught me to put my feet on the proper path toward mission-

ary service and to turn my heart toward godly things.

Elder Scheiss let me baptize our first convert. Mario had already been taught most of the missionary discussions by the time I arrived, but my companion thought it best that I perform the ordinance. I studied hard to memorize the baptismal prayer in Spanish. I worked on my accent in order to be understood on that sacred occasion.

I shall never forget finally finding myself standing in the baptismal font at the Deseret Branch with Mario, raising my arm to the square, and saying, "Habiendo sido comisionado por Jesucristo . . ." "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you" (D&C 20:73).

I had heard of people being commissioned to paint pictures. I had heard of people being commissioned to serve as military officers. But when it occurred to me that I had been commissioned by the Savior to baptize in his sacred name for the remission of sins, I felt a rush of testimony and pride and gratitude that went through my entire soul. I knew that I was in the service of the most important Master of all. I knew I was authorized to perform that ordinance, and I knew that Mario left that font pure and clean and acceptable to our Heavenly Father. I am grateful to my companion for that baptism experience. And I am grateful for my commission from the Lord.

Blessings of missionary work

In August of this year, the Aaronic Priesthood young men of our ward had the assignment to administer the sacrament to the residents of a local rest home. I went along with them in case they needed some assistance. Naturally, they didn't. Everything was under control. But as a result of my attendance there, I had a great experience. After the meeting, the branch president came to me and asked: "Would you happen to be related to Billy E. Dunn?"

I said, "Yes, sir. He's my father."

He then said: "Your dad was one of my favorite missionary companions. We served on the mission board together. And I'll never forget when President Murphy sent us out in the mission's old Model A Ford to tour the island." And he went on reminiscing for some time, telling me of his missionary experiences with my father in Hawaii fifty years ago. By the way he spoke, the light in his eye, and the smile on his face, it was as though he lived those cherished experiences only yesterday.

The interpersonal relationships between missionaries are among the choicest blessings we receive as the result of missionary service. The friendships and the positive influence of one missionary upon the other can be eternal.

Influencing lives for the better

One of the great thrills a missionary has is to play a part in having the gospel change the life of a person, of a complete family—to see an unhappy mother, a confused father, a lost young woman or young man find his way to the path that leads to real happiness and eventually to eternal life.

No missionary that ever lived failed to influence the lives of many for the better regardless of the number of converts he may have gained.

Energized, enthusiastic, optimistic, and confident

With respect to his personal challenges, every missionary will tell you, as I tell you now, that as he presses on and exercises his faith there comes the most extraordinary spiritual sensation: a flow of confidence, courage and power to overcome, a knowledge that God is with him and that he cannot fail with God on his side—regardless of the nature of the problem or even the results.

It has been my experience that while serving full time as a missionary

I have felt more energized, more enthusiastic, more optimistic, and more confident in doing what I was doing than in any other thing I've done in my life. Particularly in connection with my most recent assignment as a mission president, I knew that God had sent me to do his work, and I knew that his work would be done. I also knew that I had the greatest generation of young men and women in the world's history there to help me and to help one another to accomplish extraordinary things during the course of our mission together. I loved to see each day dawn, and I treasured the experiences of every day.

"Y Yo Tercero"

Missionaries not only teach, they also learn a great deal from others. One thing I learned as a young missionary was that spiritual fitness, as well as physical and mental fitness, comes by paying a price that includes self-denial.

After I had been made a senior companion, I met Carlos Garcia in Montevideo. Carlos was about fourteen years old. We became acquainted as he attended our presentations of the missionary discussions in the home of his neighbors, the Carabajals. Carlos wanted us to teach his family and helped us arrange to meet his parents and his younger brothers and sisters. We taught the Garcias and watched them become members of the Church. One day as we visited in the Garcia home, we noticed large red letters about six inches high that had been cut out and pasted on the living room wall. They spelled "*Y Yo Tercero*," meaning "And I Third."

We asked Carlos what the saying meant. He said: "Well, I figure it this way. God is first. My family and others come second. And I am third." I have never forgotten this great teaching.

Colombian missionaries

On my most recent mission, which I served with my wife, Penny, and our six daughters, we came espe-

cially to love and appreciate our missionaries and had a special appreciation for our Colombian missionaries.

I know that the same can be said for missionaries serving all over the world in their own homelands. They are remarkable. Our Colombian missionaries were not only handsome, charming, and intelligent, but they were also dedicated, capable, and effective. One unusual Colombian missionary with his North American junior companion, because of their special gifts and talents, baptized fifty-two people in one month. Another Colombian sister was responsible for the conversion of fourteen people before she had been a member of the Church for one year and received a formal call as a missionary. These young people returned home from their missions without fanfare. Many of them did not know where they would live. Many of them had parents who made it clear to them that they had no place in their homes on their return. But they served God first, with faith that he would provide for them and for their future. It is impossible adequately to eulogize these young people. My only regret concerning our Colombian missionaries was that we did not have three times as many.

No one pointing accusing finger

At times, as we talk of missions and missionary work, some young men shy away because they do not feel that they are worthy. Please remember, young men, that no one points an accusing finger at you. Your priesthood leaders—your adviser and your bishop—do not set themselves as judges to criticize. They want to help. If you feel that worthiness is a problem and it's bothering you, talk to your quorum adviser or, if necessary, see your bishop and set a course with him to get yourself squared away with the Lord. What a great blessing it will be to you, to us, and to many hundreds of others.

One time a young missionary who had recently arrived at Bogota to serve in our mission said to me in an initial interview: "Well, President, I guess you've heard all about me and about all the trouble I was before receiving my mission call and all the problems I had at the MTC."

I said to him: "No, Elder, I haven't heard a thing and, frankly, unless it concerns a serious moral transgression, I don't want to know. The only thing that matters to me, and I believe that the only thing that matters to the Lord, is what you do from now on. I know that you have been called by God to serve in this mission and that you can be a powerful and effective advocate for the Savior. You have a real opportunity right here and right now to go out and show the Lord and others who you really are and what you can do." I think the missionary was a little surprised at my response, and it effectively terminated our interview.

That young man worked with enthusiasm and energy in some of the areas of our mission that might be considered tough. He taught, he converted, he baptized. He became a district leader and a zone leader. He left our mission with my greatest respect for the work he had done and for the man he had become.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Caring—the motivating force

Benjamin Franklin said, "I think that talents for the education of the youth are the gift of God; and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for use of them, is as strongly called as if he heard a voice from heaven."

And Elder Harold B. Lee related: "Someone asked [a great opera singer who had a large family] which of her children was her favorite. Her reply revealed the depth of her true moth-

A missionary testimony

Above all the benefits and blessings of missionary service that come into the life of a missionary—and that which brings unparalleled peace and comfort to the soul—is the testimony which comes to him, perhaps not all at once, perhaps line upon line. (See Isaiah 28:13.) That testimony I wish to bear to you now as a returned missionary. I know God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, the leader of all humanity, and the measure of mankind. He is the King, our Counselor, and our Friend. He is worthy of our most pure and profound adoration and deserving of our very best efforts. As missionaries, we long to serve him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. (See D&C 4:2.) In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Dunn.

We shall now hear from Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

erhood: 'My favorite child is the one who is sick until he gets well or the one who is absent until he returns' " (in *Church News*, 13 June 1964, p. 14).

This same great depth of caring ought to be the motivating force behind every bishop and every adviser.

Growing up no picnic

John Sonnenberg, a great Regional Representative, related this experience as a young dentist. They had seven children, all young, and only one

car. When his wife went to town she had to take the bus. One day she and the seven children were waiting for the bus. When the bus stopped, the children and Sister Sonnenberg boarded. She put her token in, and then stood and put one token in the box for each of her seven children. The bus driver was amazed, and he said, "Lady, are these all your children, or is this a picnic?"

She responded, "They are all my children, and it's no picnic!"

In this generation, growing up is no picnic for a young man. It requires stability, high standards, prayer, and parents and Aaronic Priesthood advisers who care.

Henry Eyring's "style"

Henry Eyring, a leading scientist and a great teacher who recently passed away, would have contests with his students. Even in his midsixties he could do a standing broad jump to the top of his desk. He challenged university students to a thirty- or forty-yard foot race.

One day just a few short years before he died, he was in the Church Administration Building. His brother-in-law, President Spencer W. Kimball, came out of his office and saw Henry Eyring standing there with a cane. He said, "Henry, what is the cane for?"

And Henry Eyring said, "Style, President, style."

No wonder he had such an influence on the minds of young men all over the Church. He had "style."

"I was listening"

This past summer at the Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Encampment, special missionary preparation workshops were held. Bishops conducted these sessions with their Aaronic Priesthood. Every young man was given his own missionary preparation book. Two thousand young men participated in this activity.

A bishop reported that one young man would not get involved. He lazed on the grass a few feet from the group.

He would occasionally laugh or seem to make fun. He would not participate, as he had no intention of serving a mission. Around a campfire that night, during a testimony meeting, this young man stood up and began to talk. He said, "This morning I did not participate in the missionary preparation workshops, but I was listening, I was listening. I have been thinking, thinking a lot." Then, with great emotion he said, "I have made a decision to go on a mission."

"What do I need to do?"

A year ago at Flagstaff, Arizona, a special banquet for Eagle Scouts was held. There were 1,150 Eagle Scouts. John Warnick, the director of Mormon Relationships, invited all those who would commit to go on a mission to stand. All 1,150 stood.

Later, one of the young men, a Catholic boy, went to the bishop and said, "I am not a Mormon, and I committed to go on a mission. What do I need to do?"

The bishop said, "Let's talk to your parents." During the visit with the family, it was decided that the family should hear the discussions. The family, including the Eagle Scout, are all members of the Church now.

Eyes open and a prayer in your heart

A ward Mutual was having a swimming party. The bishopric attended, dressed in suits. Many of the youth had already been in swimming. Everything stopped while a great old high priest gave an opening prayer. During the prayer there was a splashing in the pool. The counselor in the bishopric said: "I think I have always been practical enough, so I opened one eye to see who it was that was so irreverent as to swim during the prayer. A twelve-year-old Spanish boy, who could not swim, had somehow gotten into the deep end of the pool and was drowning. His eyes reflected fear and terror. I took

two steps, dove into the pool, suit, shoes and all, pulled the young man to the side and helped him out. He sat on the edge of the pool and I waited in the pool. The good old high priest prayed on and on."

The counselor continued, "I think the young man would have drowned if we had waited for the prayer to end to save him." Then he concluded by saying, "I think we have to keep an eye open and be ready to do whatever is necessary to save our youth. And by the way, the bishop never did open his eyes, even when I dove in."

Bishops, keep your eyes open, with a constant prayer in your heart that the Lord will let you know when your youth are in trouble.

A salesman approached a door. Inside, a young man was dutifully, dully practicing the piano. The salesman said, "Young man, is your mother home?"

The boy replied, "What do you think?"

As this mother monitored her son's practicing, we give thanks to the great men who dutifully monitor, care for, and love the youth.

Commit to pray

Some years back, Terry, a deacon, was at Tracy Wigwam on an overnight camp. That night a full moon hung overhead. The adviser took Terry by the arm and said, "Let's go for a walk." They went several hundred feet from the cabins. The adviser said, "Terry, let's kneel here and have a prayer." They knelt together and prayed. After the prayer Terry's adviser said to him, "Terry, do you pray?" Terry answered that he did not. "Terry, will you commit to pray every day all the rest of your life?"

Terry said, "I never made a commitment unless I intended to keep it." He thought about prayer and decided it was right. It was a good thing. He said to his adviser, "Yes, I will pray all the rest of my life."

Terry, who went on to high school, then quarterbacked for the University of Utah where he was all-conference, and went on to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers, said, "I have kept that commitment, and I have prayed every morning and night since that day." And Terry is here tonight.

Harness the energies of love

One of the most Christlike acts any leader can perform is to go out after the sheep. Elder Harold B. Lee said, "One's love is measured by how much he gives, not how much he gets." (Excerpts from an address by Elder Harold B. Lee at the Venturer-Explorer Department, pamphlet, 1968, n.p.)

A French scientist, Rene de Char-dan, said, "Some day after we have mastered the winds and the waves, the tides and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of the world men will have discovered fire." Such is the love of a great man in my life, Bruford Reynolds.

Bruford Reynolds believed in me

When I was a boy of eleven, I used to go over to the old Richards Ward every Tuesday night. The Scouts would be having their troop meeting. I would lie on the ground and watch through the basement window. The Scouts would have patrol contests, build a fire using flint and steel, practice first aid, drill, and play games. I could hardly wait to become a deacon and a Scout.

When I was ordained a deacon I also registered in Scouting. Bruford Reynolds was the deacons quorum adviser for a period of time and also was the Scoutmaster.

Two months after I joined the troop I went to Brother Reynolds's home to pass off the Second Class requirements. When I had done this, Bruford Reynolds said to me: "Vaughn, you have a lot of leadership ability, but we cannot use you because you are

rowdy in troop meeting. When you get squared away, we need you."

Having come from a large inactive family that was poor, I had little personal attention. My father had never told me that I could be anything. I gave a great deal of thought to my conduct. I decided to change. The following Tuesday I hardly moved an eyeball. I was as near perfect as I knew how to be.

Bruford Reynolds was true to his word. I became an assistant patrol leader, a patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, then senior patrol leader. He believed in me and had a profound impact on my life.

"He will lead in high places in the Church"

About five years ago I called Bruford Reynolds on the phone. He was bishop at the time. I said, "May I be invited to speak at your sacrament meeting sometime in the near future?"

He said, "We are not supposed to ask General Authorities."

"You aren't," I said. "I am asking you."

He then said, "I would love to have you come on Easter." So I prepared a talk on the Savior's life.

When I began to speak, I first told the people in his ward what a wonderful man their bishop had been in my life. I told them how I used to go over and lie down on the ground and watch through the window. I shared with them examples of great lessons he taught me. I told them of the influence he had on my life and how he had told me I had leadership abilities. Then I shared with them how much I loved him. After brief comments about the bishop, I then spoke about the Savior.

At the conclusion of my talk, Bishop Reynolds stood. "We are not supposed to speak after General Authorities," he said, "but I want to share this additional part of the story that Elder Featherstone does not know.

"During part of the time I was deacons adviser and Scoutmaster, I also served another youth group. Both

groups met on Tuesday, the Scouts at 7:30 and the other group at 8:00. I would get Scout meeting started and then I would leave to go over to the Lincoln Ward where the second group met. At 8:30 I would return to conclude the last half hour of Scout meeting. Elder Featherstone was my senior patrol leader, and I would leave him in charge of the troop. He isn't the only one who has lain on the ground and watched through the basement window! I used to do that when I would come back from Lincoln Ward. I wanted to see what was going on.

"One night I had a problem and could not make it back to the Scout troop until just before 9:00 P.M. I did not stop to look in the window, but just hurried down the hall to the Scout room. You can learn a lot about what is going on in a youth meeting by listening at the door. I listened at the door. Elder Featherstone had called the troop together for a Scoutmaster's Minute. I could hear what was being said.

"All of a sudden I heard footsteps behind me. I looked back, and here were four district commissioners from the Boy Scouts who had come to visit our troop. I wondered what they thought when they saw the Scoutmaster standing outside the Scout room, listening at the door. I didn't know what to say, so I put my finger to my lips in a hushing signal, and then I motioned them to listen at the door. They all leaned over and listened. In a minute one of the men said, 'That boy will be a fine leader out in the world some day.'"

And Bru Reynolds said, "No, one day he will lead in high places in this Church."

What life is all about

Two years ago we decided to have a reunion and honor Bruford Reynolds and other youth leaders who led us in Richards Ward between 1940 and 1950. The chapel was completely filled with men, former boys who had lived in the ward. We had raised money to

buy some very nice gifts, which were presented to them, and using an opaque projector, we showed pictures of the boys and some of the activities during those years. We made a real fuss over Bruford Reynolds and the other great men.

Then we called for a response. Bruford Reynolds stood up, and with great tears dimming his eyes he said, "I think this is the greatest day of my life." As I thought about that statement, I looked out across that group of deacons/Scouts grown tall. It included three men who had been stake presidents, two men who had been mission presidents, several men in stake presidencies, thirty-three men who had been bishops or counselors, and one who is a General Authority. Then I thought, maybe this is what life is all about, to be able to look back and see the young men you had influenced grow up and become leaders in the kingdom.

Love and farewell between a great adviser and a boy

A short time after that reunion, young Bruford Reynolds, a son, who was also a bishop, called and said, "Did you know my dad is in the hospital? He had a serious heart attack. He is in the LDS Hospital, and we wondered if you knew." I had not known. I told him that I would like to see him but I had to catch a plane in a little over an hour. I didn't see how I could get up to the hospital before I had to leave. He then said, "Oh, that's okay. Dad is going to be released tomorrow to return home."

I said, "Tell him I love him, and I'll drop in to see him as soon as I get back."

I hung up the phone, thought for only a moment, and decided everything else could wait. I took my briefcase, airplane tickets, and drove to the LDS Hospital to see Bruford Reynolds. As I walked through the door, our eyes met. The love between a great man and boy spanned the years. I went over to him and sat down, and we talked. Then I said, "I know you have been adminis-

tered to, but would you feel all right if I knelt by your bed and offered a prayer?" I knelt down and together we prayed. When I finished, my eyes were filled with tears, as were his. Then I bent down over him and kissed him on the forehead and left.

Bruford Reynolds died an hour later. I was one of his boys, saying "farewell" to a great adviser one last time.

Watchmen and torchbearers

My testimony to all of you wonderful brethren who preside over and lead the Aaronic Priesthood is that you are more important to the Church than you would ever dare to suppose.

In Isaiah, the prophet asks, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11). This generation of youth will be the torchbearers in the future, possibly in the darkest period of the world. So remember, brethren:

The God of the great endeavor gave me a torch to bear.

I lifted it high above me in the dark and murky air.

Straightway with loud hosannas the crowd acclaimed its light,

And followed me as I carried my torch through the dark and starless night.

Til mad with peoples' praises and drunken with vanity,

I forgot it was the torch that drew them and fancied they followed me.

And my arm grew sore and weary upholding the shining load,

And my tired feet went stumbling over the hilly road.

I fell with the torch beneath me, in a moment the flame was out.

But lo, from the throng a stripling sprang forth with a mighty shout,

Caught up the torch as it smoldered and lifted it high again,

Til fanned by the winds of heaven it fired the souls of men.

As I lay alone in the darkness, the feet of the trampling crowd,

Passed over and far beyond me, their praises proclaimed aloud.

And I learned in the deepening shadow this glorious verity,
 'Tis the torch the people follow, who ere the bearer be.

("The Torchbearer," anonymous.)

A great truth. They *will* be the torchbearers. May we be the watch-

men. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Featherstone.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder David B. Haight

I rejoice with each of you priesthood holders, assembled in hundreds of meetinghouses throughout the world, in the knowledge that what is said here tonight is in harmony with and will assist in hastening the fulfillment of ancient and modern prophecy of our Lord and Savior's plan "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

We have a great work entrusted to us. My remarks tonight are centered in our efforts to find and recover men and families who have strayed from active Church participation. The dedicated heart and willing mind of every man and boy listening tonight is required to be vigorously involved in his priesthood responsibility to bring into activity and fellowship those men and boys we classify as inactive, thereby moving mankind nearer to the ultimate peace and joy of eternal life.

Two young men took different paths

During this past month I received two widely differing messages. One was a formal invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony in Washington, D. C., of the newest and youngest member of the United States Tax Court—an appointment made by the President of the United States, and a very prestigious honor.

Within hours of receiving that invitation, I had a visit from a law en-

forcement officer inquiring if I knew a certain young man. I replied, "Of course I know him. Why do you ask?" This young man had indicated to the officer that he knew me. A sordid story was then related to me of drugs, immorality, stealing to satisfy the high cost of drugs, buying illicit sexual favors, and cheap rooming house living. When I expressed a desire to see and help this young man, the officer suggested I not see him at this time because of his emotional condition.

The families of these two young men are well known to me. As boys they were members of the same ward. Both received the Aaronic Priesthood and had had the same Sunday School teachers. The scriptures, Church magazines, and lesson manuals had been made available in their homes.

One received the Melchizedek Priesthood, fulfilled a mission, married in the temple, and while attending law school served in a bishopric; and now, Judge Stephen Jensen Swift has been honored by his national government by appointment to a federal judgeship.

The other young man never merited or obtained the promised blessings of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Going to top-rated private schools overshadowed interest in a mission. He never married, associated with the wrong people, has now become a ridiculer of gospel principles because they differ from his life-style, and is virtually an outcast from family,

society, and from the word of God. His family's life-style failed to encourage him spiritually by its lack of interest in the scriptures, family home evenings, family and personal prayer, and hearing in their home testimonies of religious belief.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"

The Honorable Judge Stephen Swift is settling his family in Washington, D. C., and learning to feel comfortable in the robes of a federal judge. He has our love, admiration, and highest respect.

The other young man needs our love even more—a special love. I have faith that we can recover him. It was such as he of whom the Savior spoke: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (Luke 15:4).

Paul taught, for he had experienced firsthand, that "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Save our youth and save generations

Young men are sowers. Young women are sowers. Who trains and guides these sowers? Who points out to them which is the right grain to place in the sower's bag? Who teaches them how to place the sower's bag on their shoulders? Who teaches the young sower going out into the field for the first time whether the season is right, or how far to scatter the seed? Hopefully, a caring father, a loving mother, teachers and quorums, or other loved ones will guide their footsteps.

"When we do not act preventively in the earlier years," President Kimball said, "we must later on act redemptively but with . . . fewer and more labored results" (MIA Conference, 23 June 1974, p. 7). In saving our youth, we save generations.

Put the priesthood of God to work

There is an unusual concern being expressed by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles over the increasing numbers of men and boys—who have such an influence upon their wives and families—who are now listed on quorum and ward reports as inactive.

We remind all of you that—

Every inactive man has a bishop, quorum president, and home teachers.

Every inactive woman has a bishop, Relief Society president, and visiting teachers.

Every inactive young woman has a bishop and a Young Women's presidency.

Every inactive young man has a bishop and quorum president.

And every member of the Church has a stake president or a mission president.

President Harold B. Lee taught: "There is no new organization necessary to take care of the needs of this people. All that is necessary is to put the priesthood of God to work" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, p. 124).

Strengthen thy brethren

Your attention to this alarming trend of inactivity must now become one of our most urgent priorities. The worth of all souls is great in the sight of God, whether they be nonmembers, inactive members, or active members.

The gospel teaches us that every member of the Church has an obligation to strengthen his fellow members. The Savior himself instructed the Apostle Peter: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

Guidelines through First Presidency and Twelve

Guidelines for Melchizedek Priesthood quorum activation efforts have already been given to stake presi-

dents with the necessary instructions from the Regional Representatives.

To clarify and reemphasize the fundamental concepts of Melchizedek Priesthood quorum participation and to help the quorums utilize their manpower resources, I would like to read the following statement of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It will guide stake presidents, bishops, and Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders in organizing local efforts to effectively reach their members:

"The Lord gave instruction in the revelations that holders of the priesthood should be organized by quorums. The presidency of the quorum is responsible for the activity of each quorum member. Home teaching, wherein quorum members 'visit the house of each member' (D&C 20:51), is one of the most effective means by which the members of the quorum are cared for and strengthened.

"The bishop, as presiding high priest and chairman of the ward priesthood executive committee, which is the home teaching committee, in consultation with Melchizedek Priesthood quorum presidents and group leaders, should assign families for home teaching purposes to quorums and groups. Generally, members will receive home teachers from their own quorums. However, where there is a special need, inactive Melchizedek Priesthood bearers and prospective elders and their families may be assigned to the quorum or group that can provide the most effective fellowshiping and teaching. Home teachers will report to their own quorum presidencies or group leaders.

"Brethren who have special talents in teaching the inactive should be assigned by the bishop as home teachers to selected inactive families. When those families are brought into activity, the teachers may then be assigned to work with other inactive families.

"When an inactive elder or prospective elder who has been assigned to the high priests is brought to priesthood meeting by his home teacher, he may attend the high priests or seventies

groups or the elders quorum, depending upon his needs. The bishop makes this decision in consultation with the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum and group leaders.

"When it is appropriate for a prospective elder to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, he should be ordained an elder and then become a member of the elders quorum. Age is not the determining factor for Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations for these brethren. Men are ordained to offices of the priesthood when their calling requires it and by inspiration and according to their worthiness." (See *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 92.)

Waiting for a knock on their door

This thoughtfully prepared statement of Melchizedek Priesthood quorum and quorum member participation has one purpose: to assist stake presidents, bishops, and the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders in organizing their priesthood power to be the most productive in bringing back those who have strayed.

Many stakes have already enthusiastically implemented activation efforts, with heart-warming results. Most wards and stakes in the Church can recount their own successes—they are many. Stake and ward leaders know what to do: inspired home teaching, temple preparation seminars, fellowshiping with genuine love, appropriate church assignments—these are the key ingredients. We need to get organized and "do it."

There are tens of thousands of good people who have quietly drifted away and are now waiting for a knock on their door. Those who have strayed must experience a doctrinal conversion and social integration by someone who cares.

Become a star thrower

Loren Eiseley walked along a stormy beach late one afternoon "with the wind roaring at his back and the

seagulls screaming" overhead. Tourists who came to the beach would collect shellfish and sea life tossed up each night, boil them in large kettles, and take the shells home as souvenirs. Eiseley walked far down the beach around a point away from the collectors and saw "a gigantic rainbow of incredible perfection." Toward its foot he "discerned a human figure . . . gazing . . . at something in the sand."

"In a pool of sand . . . a starfish had thrust its arms up stiffly and was holding its body away from the stifling mud. . . . ["Is it still alive?" Eiseley asked.]

"'Yes,' " [said the man standing in the rainbow] and with a quick . . . gentle movement he picked up the star and spun it . . . far out into the sea.

"It may live," he said, "if the offshore pull is strong enough. . . ."

At first Eiseley felt only the futility of the man's efforts, "throwing one starfish at a time back into the sea when it nightly tosses out hundreds." He walked away, looking sadly "at the shell collectors . . . [and] the steaming kettles in which . . . voiceless things were being boiled alive."

The next morning Eiseley again went to the beach. Again the star thrower was there. "Silently [Eiseley] . . . picked up a still-living star, spinning it far out into the waves. . . . 'I understand,' [he] said. 'Call me [a star] thrower [also].'"

Of throwing the starfish back he wrote, "It was like a sowing—the sowing of life on an infinitely gigantic scale. . . ." He saw the star thrower stoop and throw once more. Eiseley joined with him. They "flung and flung again while all about [them] roared the insatiable waters."

They, "alone and small in that immensity, hurled back the living stars." They set their shoulders and

"cast, . . . slowly, deliberately, and well. The task was not to be assumed lightly" (Loren Eiseley, *The Star Thrower* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978], pp. 171–73, 184). Each moment counted if they were to rescue the starfish that they sought to save.

We need star throwers—throwers with vision and who have a sense of discipleship with the Savior, who feel the need to save where there is still life and hope and value, and not to let that life die on a friendless beach, but to hurl it back to where it belongs.

In a world where materialism, cynicism, and hopelessness exists, we share the message of greatest hope—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Be a star thrower! Then you may better understand our Lord's commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19).

God bless us all in his divine work of the recovering of souls, that our resolve will be firm, that our timing will be now, and that our success will be sweet, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Haight.

We shall stand and sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." We shall then hear from President Ezra Taft Benson.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

President Ezra Taft Benson

What manner of men ought we to be?

My beloved brethren, I have entitled my remarks "What Manner of Men Ought We to Be?" You will recognize this title as a variation of the question Jesus posed to the Nephites. (See 3 Nephi 27:27.) It is a timely question for each member of the priesthood of God to consider.

This title is prompted by reports that have recently come to my attention about the shocking actions of some fathers and husbands, and their unrighteous actions involve wife and child abuse.

Emulate the character of the Savior

As I have listened to these reports, I have asked myself, "How can any member of the Church—any man who holds the priesthood of God—be guilty of cruelty to his own wife and children?"

Such actions, if practiced by a priesthood holder, are almost inconceivable. They are totally out of character with the teachings of the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As priesthood holders, we are to emulate the character of the Savior.

The Christlike traits

And what is His character?

He has identified the cardinal virtues of His divine character in a revelation to all priesthood holders who serve in His ministry. You are familiar with this verse in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which was given a year before the Church was organized:

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (D&C 4:6).

These are the virtues we are to emulate. This is the Christlike character.

Let us discuss a few of these traits.

Virtuous behavior

A priesthood holder is *virtuous*. Virtuous behavior implies that he has pure thoughts and clean actions. He will not lust in his heart, for to do so is to "deny the faith" and to lose the Spirit. (See D&C 42:23.)

He will not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). This means fornication, homosexual behavior, self-abuse, child molestation, or any other sexual perversions.

Virtue is akin to holiness—an attribute of godliness. A priesthood holder should actively seek for things that are virtuous and lovely and not that which is debasing or sordid. Virtue will "garnish [his] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

Whenever a priesthood holder departs from the path of virtue in any form or expression, he loses the Spirit and comes under Satan's power. He then receives the wages of him whom he has chosen to serve. As a result, sometimes the Church must take disciplinary action, for we cannot condone nor pardon unvirtuous and unrepented actions.

All priesthood holders must be morally clean to be worthy to bear the authority of Jesus Christ.

Temperate in emotions and expressions

A priesthood holder is *temperate*. This means he is restrained in his emotions and verbal expressions. He does things in moderation and is not given to overindulgence. In a word, he has self-control. He is the master of his emotions, not the other way around.

A priesthood holder who would curse his wife, abuse her with words or

actions, or do the same to one of his own children is guilty of grievous sin.

"Can ye be angry, and not sin?" asked the Apostle Paul (Joseph Smith Translation, Ephesians 4:26).

If a man does not control his temper, it is a sad admission that he is not in control of his thoughts. He then becomes a victim to his own passions and emotions, which lead him to actions that are totally unfit for civilized behavior, let alone behavior for a priesthood holder.

President David O. McKay once said, "A man who cannot control his temper is not very likely to control his passion, and no matter what his pretensions in religion, he moves in daily life very close to the animal plane" (*Improvement Era*, June 1958, p. 407).

Patient and understanding

A priesthood holder is to be *patient*. Patience is another form of self-control. It is the ability to postpone gratification and to bridle one's passions. (See Alma 28:12.) A patient man does not engage in impetuous behavior in his relationships with loved ones, which he will later regret. Patience is composure under stress. A patient man is understanding of others' faults.

A priesthood bearer who is patient will be tolerant of the mistakes and failings of his loved ones. Because he loves them, he will not find fault nor criticize nor blame.

Kind and gentle

A priesthood bearer is *kind*. One who is kind is sympathetic and gentle with others. He is considerate of others' feelings and courteous in his behavior. He has a helpful nature. Kindness pardons others' weaknesses and faults.

Emulate Christ's way of life

Can you see how we become more Christlike as we are more virtuous, more kind, more patient, and more in control of our emotional feelings?

The Apostle Paul used some vivid expressions to illustrate that a member of the Church must be different from the world. He commended us to "put on Christ," "put off . . . the old man," and "put on the new man" (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:22, 24).

What does that mean to us as brethren of the priesthood?

It means that we must become like Jesus Christ. We must emulate His way of life in our lives. Of necessity, we must be "born again" (John 3:3) and put aside worldly lusts and former behavior unsuited to the Christlike character. We must seek the Holy Ghost to temper our actions.

Desire a righteous and virtuous life

How is this done?

As I've thought about the serious sins that some of our brethren have committed, I've wondered, "Did they seek the Lord to help them overcome their emotional outbursts? Did they rely on fasting and prayer? Did they seek a priesthood blessing? Did they ask our Heavenly Father to temper their emotions by the influence of the Holy Ghost?"

Jesus said we are to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (3 Nephi 12:6). To do this, we must earnestly desire a righteous and virtuous life.

Call upon God and give away all sins

I cite for you an example of a man whose life was changed to a more Christlike life after he earnestly desired such a change and sought the Lord's help.

Lamoni's father was a king who had bitter enmity toward the Nephites. A great missionary by the name of Aaron—one of the sons of Mosiah—had come to the Lamanite nation to bring them the gospel. He proceeded to the king's home and subsequently engaged him in a gospel discussion about the purpose of life. Once the king became receptive to his message, Aaron

taught him about Christ, the plan of salvation, and the possibility of eternal life.

This message so impressed the king that he asked Aaron, "What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy" (Alma 22:15).

Aaron instructed him to call upon God in faith to help him repent of all his sins. The king, anxious for his own soul, did as Aaron instructed:

"O God," he prayed, "Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and *I will give away all my sins to know thee*" (Alma 22:18; italics added).

Now I want you, my brethren, to hear again this humble man's words: "I will give away *all my sins to know thee*."

Brethren, each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ. For we do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like this king, who must pray until they, too, have "a wicked spirit rooted" from them so they can find the same joy.

Act as He would act

Attaining a righteous and virtuous life is within the capability of any one of us if we will earnestly seek for it. If we do not have these character traits, the Lord has told us that we should "ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 4:7).

The Apostle Peter tells us that when we possess these traits we are not "unfruitful in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8; italics added).

To *know* the Savior, then, is to be like Him.

God will bless us to be like His Son when we make an earnest effort.

To be like Christ should be the righteous aspiration of every priest-

hood holder. We should act as He would act in our relationships with others.

The Lord said,

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself . . . *all ungodliness, and every worldly lust*, and keep my commandments" (see Matthew 16:24; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 16:26; italics added).

He expects His disciples to follow Him by their actions.

The commandments to love

Now, may I say a word about our relationships with our wives and our families.

Your wife is your most precious and eternal helpmate—your eternal companion. She is to be cherished and loved.

There are only two commandments where the Lord tells us to love someone with all our hearts. The first you are familiar with as the Great Commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

The second commandment to love another with all our hearts is this: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt *cleave unto her* and none else" (D&C 42:22; italics added).

There are only two whom we are commanded to love with all our hearts—the Lord our God, and our wives!

Love wife and family

What does it mean to love someone with all our hearts? It means with all our emotional feelings and our devotion. Surely when you love your wife with all your heart, you cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her, nor abuse her by words, sullen behavior, or actions.

What does it mean to "cleave unto her"? It means to stay close to her, to be loyal to her, to strengthen her, to

communicate with her, and to express your love for her.

The same applies to our families. Our homes should be havens of peace and joy for our families. Surely no child should fear his own father—especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, contention, or unrighteous behavior.

Leadership in the home

As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in the home. You must create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide.

You should always remember the statement of the Savior that "the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil" (3 Nephi 11:29). Never allow the adversary to be an influence in your home.

Change of attitude and behavior

Now, brethren, I have spoken plainly. I do not wish to offend anyone, but there needs to be a change of attitude and behavior on the part of some who claim membership in the Lord's church but who act in an un-Christlike manner.

As holders of the priesthood of God, we must be more Christlike in our attitude and behavior than what we see in the world. We should be as charitable and considerate with our loved ones as Christ is with us. He is kind, loving, and patient with each of us. Should we not reciprocate the same love to our wives and children?

I opened with the question "What manner of men ought we to be?" You remember the Lord's answer is this: "Verily I say unto you, *even as I am*" (3 Nephi 27:27; italics added).

He expects us to be like Him. He expects us to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in our lives which are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Christlike traits to permeate home

These Christlike traits should characterize each priesthood holder and should permeate every Latter-day Saint home. It can be done and must be done if we are to honorably bear His name.

Never in the history of mankind has there been a greater need for men to be united in their determination and actions to be Christlike in character.

To follow Him is to emulate His character.

Resolve to "put on Christ"

Let us not leave this priesthood meeting tonight without a firm resolve to put aside any action that is foreign to the nature of Christ.

Let us resolve to apply the traits of our Lord and Savior in our own lives.

Let us as priesthood brethren have His image in our countenances. (See Alma 5:14, 19.)

Let us "put on Christ"!

He is our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Great Exemplar.

This is my fervent witness as I invoke the blessings of God upon each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Benson, for that timely and important message.

For those of you who plan to come to the Tabernacle for the morning session tomorrow, you must be in your seats before 9:15 A.M. because of the broadcast.

We are grateful to the men of this combined choir for the inspiring music which has added so much to this service. Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing "Ye Who Are Called to Labor," following which Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, I pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Young men: Congratulations on goodness of your lives

I should like first to say a few words to the boys who are here. I think every one of you young men wishes to be successful in life. The fact that you have made an effort to attend this meeting indicates that you are interested in worthwhile things. I recently read the results of a study of high school students in the United States: "Religion plays a prominent role in the lives of high school students who earn top grades and participate in extracurricular activities, a recent poll reports. The poll . . . surveyed 55,000 juniors and seniors from 22,000 public, private, and parochial high schools across the nation. . . . The survey shows that 85 percent of high achievers are reared in homes in which both natural parents live and formal religion is practiced. Nearly 45 percent live in rural communities. By an 84 percent margin, high achievers favor traditional marriages and reject the use of cigarettes and illegal drugs. Only 4 percent have used marijuana, and 89 percent have never smoked cigarettes" (*Christianity Today*, 18 Feb. 1983, p. 35).

You see, you who are members of the Church are not alone. Those who indulge in cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs would try to make you believe that you are "square" because you do not. But the fact is that there are tens of thousands just like you. Most of the youth of the Church refrain from these substances. And beyond these are the thousands of students who earn top grades and participate in extracurricular activities in their high schools, 85 percent of whom come from good homes where formal religion is practiced, and 89 percent of whom have never smoked cigarettes. It is a fact that you are with the majority of the

achievers when you leave these things alone.

To you young men who are here tonight in such large numbers—you deacons, teachers, and priests—I congratulate you most warmly on the goodness of your lives. I congratulate you on your strength, your courage to stand by your convictions. I congratulate you on your ambitions to educate your minds and hands, to serve the Lord as missionaries, to live lives that will be a credit to yourselves, to your families, and to the Church of which you are members.

Lure of immorality

And while I congratulate you on your strength to refrain from the use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, none of which will do you any good and all of which will do you harm, I warn you of another insidious and growing evil. This is the seductive lure of immorality. I am going to speak plainly. We hear much these days of teenage sexual misbehavior. There is too much of it among our own youth.

Any boy who indulges in illegitimate sexual activity, as we define that in the doctrines and standards of this Church—and I think no one misunderstands what I mean when I say that—does himself irreparable damage and robs her with whom he is involved of that which can never be restored. There is nothing clever about this kind of so-called conquest. It carries with it no laurels, no victories, no enduring satisfaction. It brings only shame, sorrow, and regret. He who so indulges cheats himself and robs her. In robbing her, he affronts her Father in Heaven, for she is a daughter of God.

I know that this is strong language, plainly spoken. But I feel the trends of our times call for strong language and plain words. Jehovah did not speak ambiguously when he said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex-

odus 20:14). Nor did the Lord when He said in modern revelation, "Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6).

Repentance and forgiveness

Before leaving this matter I should like to add that if there be any here who have so sinned, there is repentance and there is forgiveness, provided there is "godly sorrow." (See 2 Corinthians 7:10.) All is not lost. Each of you has a bishop, who has been ordained and set apart under the authority of the holy priesthood and who, in the exercise of his office, is entitled to the inspiration of the Lord. He is a man of experience, he is a man of understanding, he is a man who carries in his heart a love for the youth of his ward. He is a servant of God who understands his obligation of confidentiality and who will help you with your problem. Do not be afraid to talk with him.

Education

Now, while I am speaking of youth, I wish to say parenthetically just a word about education. I have great respect and appreciation for teachers. I am pleased to note that there is a public awakening to the need to prioritize our educational resources and programs. We live in a competitive world, and those who are now being trained will need the very best of schooling if they are to be qualified for the society into which they will move within a very short time.

We have in the Church a strong tradition regarding quality education. Over the years we have allocated a substantial part of the Church budget to education, both secular and religious. As a people we have supported public education. Where there is a well-demonstrated need, we should be supportive. Such can become an investment in the lives of our children, our communities, and our nation. However, let it not be supposed that all of

the remedies may be found only with increased funding. There is need for a searching analysis of priorities and a careful weighing of costs. Let us be supportive; let us also be prudent concerning the resources of the people.

Older brethren: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"

Now to you older brethren, may I touch upon a subject that may be pertinent to some of you, and to which President Benson has so eloquently referred. It is the responsibility to keep ourselves free from what one writer called "the world's slow stain." I speak of those influences of which I spoke to the boys, the beguiling and seductive lures that pull us in the direction of immorality and nullify our effectiveness as priesthood leaders.

Declared the Lord in 1831: "Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42).

The plague of pornography

There is an ever-growing plague of pornography swirling about us. The producers and purveyors of smut are assiduously working a mine that yields them many millions in profit. Some of their products are artfully beguiling. They are designed to titillate and stimulate the baser instincts. Many a man who has partaken of forbidden fruit and then discovered that he has destroyed his marriage, lost his self-respect, and broken his companion's heart, has come to realize that the booby-trapped jungle trail he has followed began with the reading or viewing of pornographic material. Some who would not think of taking a sip of liquor or of smoking a cigarette, have rationalized indulgence in pornography. Such have warped values totally unbecoming one who has been ordained to the priesthood of God.

Portrayals of sexual perversion, violence, and bestiality become increasingly available for those who succumb to their lures. As this happens,

religious activities are likely to become less attractive because the two do not mix any more than oil and water mix.

Dangers of television

A thought-provoking study was recently published in *Public Opinion* magazine. It has been commented upon by many writers. John Dart, religion editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote a column last February in which he said:

"A survey of influential television writers and executives in Hollywood has shown that they are far less religious than the general public and 'diverge sharply from traditional values' on such issues as abortion, homosexual rights and extramarital sex. . . . While nearly all of the 104 Hollywood professionals interviewed had a religious background, 45 percent now say they have no religion, and of the other 55 percent only 7 percent say they attend a religious service as much as once a month.

"This group has had a major role in shaping the shows whose themes and stars have become staples in our popular culture.' . . .

"Eighty percent of the respondents said they did not regard homosexual relations as wrong, and 51 percent did not deem adultery as wrong. Of the 49 percent who called extramarital affairs wrong, only 17 percent felt that way strongly, the study said. Nearly all—97 percent—favored the right of a woman to choose an abortion, 91 percent holding that view strongly.

"By contrast, other surveys have indicated that 85 percent of Americans consider adultery wrong, 71 percent regard homosexual activity wrong and nearly three-fourths of the public wants abortion limited to certain hard cases or banned altogether" (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Feb. 1983, part 2, page 5).

These are the people who, through the medium of entertainment, are educating us in the direction of their own standards, which in many cases are diametrically opposed to the standards

of the gospel. Even beyond these, who produce for public television and cable, are the hard-core pornographers who seductively reach out to ensnare those gullible enough and those so weak in their discipline of self that they spend money to buy these lascivious products.

Nephi foresaw our day

We are not immune to these influences. Centuries ago Nephi foresaw our day and said concerning it:

"For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, for the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish;

"For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:19–22).

That which "carefully leads him down to hell"

Those are interesting and descriptive words—"leadeth them away carefully down to hell," and "he whispereth in their ears." How descriptive of the seductive and beguiling ways of the purveyors of filth and violence and evil.

Brethren, I am not suggesting a public boycott, but I am suggesting a personal avoidance of such things. There is so much of the good and the beautiful and the uplifting in literature

and art and life itself that there should be no time for any man who holds the priesthood of God to patronize, to watch, to buy that which only "carefully leads him down to hell."

Critics belittle the divine

Now there is another matter I wish to mention. And perhaps I could repeat a few lines that I spoke on another occasion:

We now seem to have a great host of critics. Some appear intent on trying to destroy us. They belittle that which we call divine.

In their cultivated faultfinding, they see not the majesty of the great onrolling of this cause. They have lost sight of the spark that was kindled in Palmyra which is now lighting fires of faith across the earth, in many lands and in many languages. Wearing the spectacles of humanism, they fail to realize that spiritual promptings, with recognition of the influence of the Holy Ghost, had as much to do with the actions of our forebears as did the processes of the mind. They have failed to realize that religion is as much concerned with the heart as it is with the intellect.

Critics belittle our forebears

We have those critics who appear to wish to cull out of a vast panorama of information those items which demean and belittle some of the men and women of the past who worked so hard in laying the foundation of this great cause. They find readers of their works who seem to delight in picking up these tidbits, and in chewing them over and relishing them. In so doing they are savoring a pickle, rather than eating a delicious and satisfying dinner of several courses.

We recognize that our forebears were human. They doubtless made mistakes. . . . But the mistakes were minor, when compared with the marvelous work which they accomplished. To highlight the mistakes and gloss

over the greater good is to draw a caricature. Caricatures are amusing, but they are often ugly and dishonest. A man may have a blemish on his cheek and still have a face of beauty and strength, but if the blemish is emphasized unduly in relation to his other features, the portrait is lacking in integrity.

"Look to God and live"

There was only one perfect man who ever walked the earth. The Lord has used imperfect people in the process of building his perfect society. If some of them occasionally stumbled, or if their characters may have been slightly flawed in one way or another, the wonder is the greater that they accomplished so much. . . .

I do not fear truth. I welcome it. But I wish all of my facts in their proper context, with emphasis on those elements which explain the great growth and power of this organization.

There is promise, given under inspiration from the Almighty, set forth in these beautiful words:

"God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 121:26).

The humanists who criticize us, the so-called intellectuals who demean us, speak only from ignorance of this manifestation. . . . They have not heard it because they have not sought after it and prepared themselves to be worthy of it. . . .

Do not be trapped by the sophistry of the world which for the most part is negative and which seldom, if ever, bears good fruit. . . . Rather, "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

Follow leadership of the Church

Brethren, the Church is true. Those who lead it have only one desire, and that is to do the will of the Lord. They seek his direction in all things. There is not a decision of significance affecting the Church and its people that is made without prayerful consider-

ation, going to the fount of all wisdom for direction. Follow the leadership of the Church. God will not let his work be led astray.

Brethren, if we live worthy of his inspiration, there will never be doubt in our minds concerning the truth of this work and the great mission of this kingdom. God bless you as men and boys holding the priesthood. May your example evoke the respect and the

admiration of all with whom you associate, I humbly pray as I leave you my witness and testimony of the divinity of this work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The men's choir sang "Ye Who Are Called to Labor."

Elder Angel Abrea offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Choir sang "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the fourth session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are greatly honored and pleased with the presence of President Spencer W. Kimball and also the presence of President Marion G. Romney. We express appreciation to the Lord, who has made it possible for these, our beloved leaders, to be with us.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television, those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Robert L. Backman preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over six hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this great conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning" and will now sing "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," following which Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee."

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks." I think I should like to use those marvelous words written by Parley P. Pratt as something of a theme:

The morning breaks; the shadows flee;

Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day
Majestic rises on the world.

The clouds of error disappear
Before the rays of truth divine;
The glory bursting from afar
Wide o'er the nations soon will shine.
(*Hymns*, no. 269.)

Work moving forward

I greet you with appreciation for your love for the Lord and for your loyalty to his great cause.

I see the fruits of your faith, and I am grateful. I thank you for the energy you put into this work. I know that at times it feels burdensome. Some of it may appear unnecessary. But out of effort and labor comes strength, and out of service comes gladness.

I thank you for your faith in the payment of your tithes and offerings. You are making possible the growth and strengthening of this work across the world. But you do not need thanks. Every man and woman who pays his or her honest tithing has a testimony of the blessings that come therefrom. He or

she can bear witness that the Lord opens the windows of heaven and pours out blessings as he has promised. (See Malachi 3:10.)

I give you the assurance, my brothers and sisters, that the work is moving forward. Wherever it is established in more than eighty nations, it is growing in strength. The faith of the people is increasing, as reflected in their increased activity. The missionary work continues to flourish. Our young men and women continue to leave their homes to go into the world to bear witness of the Savior and of the restoration of his eternal gospel in this the dispensation of the fulness of times. (See D&C 124:41.) The work of salvation for the dead, through the vast genealogical program of the Church and the selfless labor of love that goes on in the temples, is moving at a pace never previously known.

Help given in Utah—

Our people are more faithful in attendance at their meetings, and since our last conference a very substantial number of them have had opportunity to demonstrate their love for neighbor as well as for God. In the floods which we have experienced in this area, there has been an unexcelled expression of neighborliness and Christian service. A woman who was not a member of the Church was interviewed on television and said, "I am not a Mormon, but I

have come to know who my bishop is." She went on to speak with unrestrained appreciation for her neighbors, who, almost entirely Latter-day Saints, had been as generous in their help toward her as they had been in their help toward one another. There is a stake not far from here where the members of each ward undertook the repair or replacement of a home damaged or lost in the flood. Hundreds of thousands of sandbags were filled and put in place. There were, of course, those not of the Church doing likewise, but all concerned have spoken with high praise for the Church organization which was able to muster forces so rapidly and so effectively.

In Tonga—

Help in very substantial quantities was sent to the people of Tonga, following a wild typhoon that ripped apart homes and farms. Both members and nonmembers were blessed by that assistance.

In Brazil—

Latter-day Saints in Brazil came to the aid of their countrymen, both Mormon and non-Mormon, who suffered the loss of homes and crops when terrible floods ravaged the vast southern area of that nation.

In Ghana

Again through the welfare program, and the cooperation of the Kaiser Aluminum Company, who furnished transportation, we were able to send substantial supplies of food and medicine to rescue many of the starving people of Ghana in Africa. Lives, not a few, were literally saved by this assistance.

I do not mention these efforts in a spirit of boasting, but only to express gratitude to the Lord for the means and the resources and the will of our people to be helpful in times of crisis.

Funds for these works of mercy have come largely from fast offerings. Despite the increased needs to meet such disasters, as well as aggravated problems incident to the present economy, fast-offering contributions have kept pace. Thank you for this marvelous expression of faith as you have gone without meals yourselves to help those in distress.

Atlanta Temple

I report also the dedication of four new temples since June of this year. For the benefit of any listening who may not be members of the Church, I should explain that a temple occupies a unique and peculiar place in our theology. It is not a house of public worship, of which we now have many thousands across the world. Temples, on the other hand, are dedicated as special houses of God, in which are performed some of the most sacred and elevating ordinances associated with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In June we dedicated a new temple in Atlanta, Georgia. This was the culmination of a dream that began a century and more ago when, in the days of the poverty of our people, missionaries were first sent to the southern states. A few accepted their testimony, but many more rose in bitterness against them. These early missionaries endured much persecution. Some were stripped and beaten; some were murdered by hateful enemies. But with faith they persevered. Eventually, thousands upon thousands joined the Church, and today the work is strong and growing in that beautiful part of the nation where we now have hundreds of faithful congregations of Latter-day Saints.

On the occasion of the Atlanta Temple dedication, the testimonies of the people—those spoken and those expressed in tears of gratitude—together with their songs of thanksgiving, all bore witness to the strength of their faith and their love for God.

Samoa and Tonga temples

In August we were in Samoa and Tonga for temple dedications. Again our hearts were lifted by the outpouring of the Christlike love we experienced and witnessed among the wonderful Saints of Polynesia. Through ancient prophets the Lord promised that in the latter days he would remember his people upon the isles of the sea. We have witnessed a marvelous fulfillment of these promises where today, among these loving and gracious people, we have scores of congregations, strong and flourishing schools to bless them with the benefits of education, and now beautiful temples of the Lord in which they may receive blessings to be found nowhere else.

Santiago Chile Temple

Only a fortnight ago we were in Santiago, Chile, for the dedication of another beautiful temple. For me it was a miracle to be with more than fifteen thousand Latter-day Saints who assembled for these dedicatory services which extended over a period of three days. The nation of Chile is twenty-seven hundred miles long, and our faithful people gathered from such distant cities as Arica in the far north and Punta Arenas in the far south to rejoice over the marvelous blessing that had come to them in the erection and dedication of this sacred house of God.

Among them were Brother and Sister Ricardo Garcia, the first to be baptized when missionaries were sent to Chile in 1956. Only twenty-seven years later, there are more than 140,000 members of the Church in that nation.

For those of us favored to attend these dedicatory services, there has come a great refreshing of our faith and an increased affection for our brethren and sisters who love the Lord and walk with loyalty to him and his commandments.

The youth—certain promise of the future

I recently had the opportunity of meeting with fourteen-thousand seminary and institute students assembled in the Long Beach Convention Center. They had gathered from various areas of Southern California, handsome young men and beautiful young women. Most are high school students who meet five days each week for a seminary class at 6:15 in the morning, which is held in a Church building near the school under the direction of a dedicated and able teacher. On my way home from Chile, I met in Detroit with another group of these students at 6:15 in the morning.

These are bright and gifted and attractive youth. One cannot look into their faces and have any doubt concerning the future of this work. They are part of a marvelous generation whose numbers are constantly growing and whose faith is infectious.

They are to be found not only in the areas I have mentioned but wherever our work is established. They are the certain promise of the future of the Church and of its growing strength and the fulfilling of its mission. Furthermore, they will bless the nations and the lands of which they are a part, for they are young men and women with ambition for education. They believe in the cultivation of the mind, of the development of their skills, of the need to master new technologies, to serve in the world of work into which they will move.

They are young men and women of virtue and sobriety who have been reared to believe that our bodies are the temples of the Spirit of God and that we cannot defile these bodies without affronting him who is our creator.

A history of faith

They are the young men and women of faith who have been schooled in the scriptures. They know the Old Testament and the great charac-

ters who march through its pages. They are familiar with the New Testament and have developed a love for the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their faith in him has been reaffirmed and strengthened as they have studied that marvelous testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon. They are familiar with the word of God as it has come through modern revelation. They are students who are acquiring both secular and religious education, learning by study and also by faith. They are examples of the power of that first great principle, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The history of this Church is a history of the expression of such faith. It began with a farm boy in the year 1820 when he read that great promise set forth in the Epistle of James:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6).

It was faith, the simple faith of a fourteen-year-old boy, that took him into the woods that spring morning. It was faith that took him to his knees in pleading for understanding. The marvelous fruit of that faith was a vision glorious and beautiful, of which this great work is but the extended shadow.

It was by faith that he kept himself worthy of the remarkable manifestations which followed in bringing to the earth the keys, the authority, the power to reestablish the Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days. It was by faith that this marvelous record of ancient peoples, this testament which we call the Book of Mormon, was brought forth by the gift and power of God "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." It was by faith that a small band of early converts, notwithstanding the very powers of hell brought against them, strengthened and sustained one another, left home and family to spread the word, moved from New York to Ohio and from Ohio to

Missouri and from Missouri to Illinois in their search for peace and freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.

It was through the eyes of faith that they saw a city beautiful when first they walked across the swamps of Commerce, Illinois. With the conviction that faith without works is dead, they drained that swampland, they platted a city, they built substantial homes and houses for worship and education and, crowning all, a magnificent temple, then the finest building in all of Illinois.

Again came persecution, with profane and murderous mobs. Their prophet was killed. Their dreams were shattered. Again it was by faith that they pulled themselves together under the pattern he had previously drawn and organized themselves for another exodus.

With tears and aching hearts they left their comfortable homes and their workshops. They looked back upon their sacred temple, and then with faith turned their eyes to the West, to the unknown and to the uncharted, and while the snows of winter fell upon them, they crossed the Mississippi that February of 1846 and plowed their muddy way over the Iowa prairie.

With faith they established Winter Quarters on the Missouri. Hundreds died as plague and dysentery and black canker cut them down. But faith sustained those who survived. They buried their loved ones there on a bluff above the river, and in the spring of 1847 they started west, moving by faith up the Elkhorn and beside the Platte toward the mountains of the West.

It was by faith that Brigham Young looked over this valley, then hot and barren, and declared, "This is the place." Again by faith, four days later, he touched his cane to the ground a few hundred feet east of where I stand and said, "Here will be the temple of our God." The magnificent and sacred house of the Lord to the east of this Tabernacle is a testimony of faith, not only of the faith of those who built it but

of the faith if those who now use is in a great selfless labor of love.

Wrote Paul to the Hebrews, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). All of the great accomplishments of which I have spoken were once only "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But with vision, with labor, and with confidence in the power of God working through them, they brought their faith to reality.

A great future

Behind us is a glorious history. It is bespangled with heroism, tenacity to principle, and unflagging fidelity. It is the product of faith. Before us is a great future. It begins today. We cannot pause. We cannot slow down. We cannot slacken our pace or shorten our stride.

In a dark period of our history, when enemies were throwing accusations against the Church, the First Presidency issued a proclamation to the world in which they set forth the dimensions of this work. Said they: "Our motives are not selfish; our purposes not petty and earth-bound; we contemplate the human race—past, present, and yet to come—as immortal beings, for whose salvation it is our mission to labor; and to this work, broad as eternity and deep as the love of God, we devote ourselves, now, and forever" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. by James R. Clark, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 26 Mar. 1907, 4:155).

A great distance to go

With faith we must go forward toward the fulfillment of that commitment. We must ever keep before us the big picture, while not neglecting the details. That large picture is a portrayal of the whole broad mission of the Church; but it is painted one brush stroke at a time through the lives of

all members, the composite of whose activities becomes the Church at work.

Each of us, therefore, is important. Each is a brush stroke, as it were, on the mural of this vast panorama of the kingdom of God. If there are blanks, if there are distortions, if there are off-color areas, then the picture is defective to all who look upon it.

Shall any of us say that with faith we cannot do better than we are now doing?

There is no obstacle too great, no challenge too difficult, that we cannot meet with faith. We live in a world where the standards of the gospel are challenged, where they are ridiculed, where sacred things are mocked. Shall we compromise? Shall we revile those who speak ungraciously of us?

In a more troubled day, the Lord said to Thomas B. Marsh:

"Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast. . . .

"Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go. . . .

"Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you. These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, by the will of the Father" (D&C 31:9, 11, 13).

Said the Savior to his disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

This is the commandment which is before us. Regrettably we have not reached perfection. We have a great distance to go. We must cultivate the faith to reform our lives, commencing where we are weak and moving on from there in our work of self-correction, thus gradually and consistently growing in strength to live more nearly as we should.

With faith we can rise above those negative elements in our lives which constantly pull us down. With effort we

can develop the capacity to subdue those impulses which lead to degrading and evil actions.

With faith we can school our appetites.

We can reach out to those whose faith has grown cold and warm them by our own faith.

God grant us faith

Let us never forget, my brethren and sisters, that each of us is a part of the whole and that what we do mars or beautifies the magnificent panorama of the kingdom of God.

As our fathers labored in faith with a moving vision of the destiny of this work, even so can we. There is so much to be done, so much improvement to be made, but we can do it, walking in faith.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; *and nothing shall be impossible unto you*" (Matthew 17:20; italics added).

So declared the Lord.

God grant us faith, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King," following which Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will address us.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Both good and evil spoken of"

Throughout the expanse of human history, no prophet has been scrutinized in such a sustained way, on as wide a scale, or for so long a period of time as Joseph Smith, Jr. The communication capacity of this age and the global impact of his work have so ensured.

Young Joseph was told that his name would be "both good and evil spoken of" throughout the world (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). Except from a divine source, how audacious a statement! Yet his contemporary religious leaders, then much better known than Joseph, have faded into the footnotes of history, while the work of Joseph Smith grows constantly and globally.

We have no hesitancy, however, in stipulating that Joseph was, by the standards of the world, "not learned." Isaiah foresaw it. (See Isaiah 29:11–12.) Joseph did not have the

skilled, formal tutoring young Saul had at the feet of Gamaliel. (See Acts 22:3.)

Emma Smith reportedly said that Joseph, at the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon, could not compose a "well-worded letter, let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon . . . [which was] marvelous to me—a marvel and a wonder—as much as to anyone else" (Preston Nibley, *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968], p. 28).

This obscure young man apparently paused while translating and dictating to Emma—probably from the fourth chapter of 1 Nephi—concerning the "wall of Jerusalem"—and said, in effect, "Emma, I didn't know there was a wall around Jerusalem."

Tutored by the Lord and by past prophets

But Joseph's keen mind was being awakened and expanded as the tutoring words of the Lord and of past prophets flowed through his quickened consciousness. In fact, he was the very seer foreseen anciently by the earlier Joseph in Egypt! (See 2 Nephi 3:6-7, 16-18.)

In a prophetic father's blessing given in December 1834 to Joseph Smith, Jr., Father Smith confirmed those promises given the ancient Joseph, and pronounced added blessings, including these, upon young Joseph: "Thy God has called thee by name out of the heavens . . . to do a work in this generation which no other man would do as Thyself." The ancient Joseph "looked after his posterity in the last days . . . And sought diligently to know . . . who would bring the word of the Lord [to them] and his eyes beheld thee, my son: [Joseph Smith, Jr.] his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied."

Young Joseph also heard his father promise, "Thou shalt like to do the work which the Lord shall command Thee." (See 2 Nephi 3:8.)

Earlier, during the approximately ninety days of translating, Joseph was processing—and at a remarkable rate—truths and concepts of immense significance, beyond what was then his capacity. A few gems only from that treasure trove:

Childlike and saintly submissiveness

Could Joseph have been expected, for instance, to appreciate fully that, through him, would be given the only significant scriptural elaboration of one of the most fundamental and demanding declarations of Jesus?

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Through Joseph Smith's translation came these stunning, defining, and

sobering words about what childlike and saintly submissiveness really means:

"A saint [is one who becomes] through the atonement of Christ the Lord . . . a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Help in overcoming temptation

Likewise, Paul wrote that since Jesus was tempted, he understood how to succor us when we are tempted. (See Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.) Yet it was through Joseph Smith that these confirming and clarifying words of Alma were given:

"And [Jesus] shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people . . . that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12).

Petitionary prayer

Illuminated also was petitionary prayer: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). "Plain and precious" and needed light was added to those words through Joseph:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20; italics added).

"He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh" (D&C 46:30).

Rich language and deep concepts

Not only did confirming and clarifying truths flow through Joseph, but also rich language and deep concepts.

From Ammon:

"How blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!

"Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven" (Mosiah 8:20–21).

From Jacob:

"Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; . . . many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds" (Jacob 2:35).

From Amulek, who finally triumphed over ambivalence:

"Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know" (Alma 10:6).

Theology and beauty combine, again and again, in the pages provided through Joseph, as when the resurrected Christ appeared in the Western Hemisphere:

"And when [Jesus] had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . .

"And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father" (3 Nephi 17:15–17).

Serious study of the blessed Book of Mormon admits one to a wonder world of complexity and beauty, even in the midst of the book's simple, but powerful, spiritual refrain. We are

given that which we most need—yet we are athirst for more!

Granted, whenever the words of heaven are filtered through mortal minds and tongues there is some diminution. Yet, as with Nephi of old, so it was with Joseph Smith:

"If ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me" (2 Nephi 33:10).

Joseph learned inspirational expression

Joseph later learned to express his own thoughts inspirationally, as in his forgiving letter of 1840 to a betraying but repenting W. W. Phelps.

"It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior—the cup of gall, already full enough for mortals to drink, was indeed filled to overflowing when you turned against us. One with whom we had oft taken sweet counsel together, and enjoyed many refreshing seasons from the Lord—"had it been an enemy, we could have borne it." . . .

"However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. . . .

"I shall be happy once again to . . . rejoice over the returning prodigal. . . .

"Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, For friends at first, are friends again at last" (*History of the Church*, 4:163–64).

Opposition in all things

Was Joseph imperfect like other prophets? Of course! Surely, Joseph could identify with these words of an ancient prophet, which he translated:

"Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more

wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31; see also D&C 67:5).

Joseph, who translated the instructive words "there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11), came to understand, by experience, that the calisthenics of spiritual growth involve isometrics, the pitting of the emerging self against the stern resistance of the old self.

Anxieties and unjust accusations

Did Joseph experience the same anxieties in carrying out his mission as did other prophets? Indeed! Joseph could understand with what feelings a weary and beset Paul wrote:

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5; see also 2 Corinthians 4:8).

Was Joseph unjustly accused as were other prophets? Yes! Even unto this very day fragments of fact are flung at his memory. Paul was accused of being mad and deranged. (See Acts 26:24.) Even Jesus himself was accused of being a winebibber, of being possessed of a devil, and of being mad. (See Matthew 11:19; John 10:20.)

Loved the work and his associates

Yet, in the midst of all these things, as promised, Joseph loved the work to which he had been called. And he loved his associates! In giving individual assignments to the Twelve, we see his love and humor tenderly intertwined:

"John Taylor, I believe you can do more good in the editorial department than preaching. You can write for thousands to read; while you can preach to but a few at a time. We have no one else we can trust the paper with, and hardly with you, for you suffer the paper to come out with so many mistakes" (*History of the Church*, 5:367).

Joseph was filled with mercy as evidenced in the healing of the many

fevered sick on the banks of a river, and where his hands could not go, Joseph sent a healing handkerchief! (See *History of the Church*, 4:3-5.)

He sorrowed over his loss of a newborn child and was given permission to care for a neighbor's child during the day, then return the baby to her mother at night. An older sister of the baby, Margarette McIntire, later reported:

"One evening he did not come [home] with [the child] at the usual time, and mother went down to the Mansion to see what was the matter, and there sat the Prophet with the baby wrapped up in a little silk quilt. He was trotting it on his knee, and singing to it to get it quiet before starting out" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1971, pp. 36-37).

Leader-servant

Was Joseph a leader-servant? Demonstrably! A girl and her brother were struggling in the deep mud on their way to school. The Prophet Joseph "stooped down and cleaned the mud from our little heavy-laden shoes, took his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped our tear-stained faces. He spoke kind and cheering words to us, and sent us on our way to school rejoicing" (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Jan. 1892, p. 67).

In fleeing with Joseph from a mob, a young man reported, "sickness and fright had robbed me of my strength. Joseph had to decide whether to leave me to be captured by the mob, or endanger himself by rendering aid. Choosing the latter course, he lifted me upon his broad shoulders and bore me with occasional rest through the swamp and darkness. Several hours later we emerged upon the only road and soon reached safety. Joseph's herculean strength permitted him to [save] my life" (*New Era*, Dec. 1973, p. 19).

A victim of intolerance, Joseph Smith was deeply offended when a Catholic convent was burned in New England, saying, "Yes, in sight of the very spot where the fire of American

Independence was first kindled" (*History of the Church*, 2:465). Maligned, even today, Joseph once declared, "I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or . . . any other denomination" (*History of the Church*, 5:498).

Tens of thousands come to truth

While most mortals misunderstand the significance of Joseph's ministry, the adversary surely did not!

Unsurprisingly, Joseph Smith, Jr., was still growing spiritually and intellectually, when he was murdered. Yet, Joseph lived long enough to "lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do" as promised in the blessing from his dying father in 1840. Now the ends of the earth inquire after his name. No wonder an admiring but dying Brigham Young's last words were "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph!" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 24th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], p. 459).

Thus, those who revile Joseph Smith will not change Joseph's status with the Lord (see 2 Nephi 3:8)—merely their own! Instead—as was promised Joseph in an 1834 father's blessing:

"Thousands and tens of thousands shall come to a knowledge of the truth, through thy ministry, and thou shalt rejoice with Them in the Celestial Kingdom; [and] thou shalt stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ."

Gratitude for the Prophet

Some may seek to explain Joseph merely by attaching to him the generous adjective *remarkable*. Joseph was remarkable, but, much more importantly, he was instrumental!

Even now, one hears faintly the distant but approaching drum roll of history building toward a crescendo of mortal recognition when all shall see "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13).

Meanwhile, the ancient records which a young Joseph translated will be with us "from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand" (2 Nephi 25:22; see also D&C 5:10). These records defined a seer as one who can translate ancient records, is a revelator, and knows of things past and future. (See Mosiah 8:13–17.) Such a seer, wrote Ammon, is greater than a prophet! (See Mosiah 8:15–17.)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, I have no hesitancy—only gladness—in declaring my everlasting admiration for Joseph, the Seer! I thank the Father for providing such a seer! I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for calling, directing, and tutoring Joseph!

Humbly, I give apostolic "praise to the man who communed with Jehovah," in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

The Choir sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Choir singing "Praise to the Man."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

President Hinckley

Elder Franklin D. Richards, who was released yesterday as a member of

the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy because of his call to preside over the Washington (D.C.) Temple, will now address us. He will

be followed by Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

My dear brothers and sisters—yes, ye are all brothers and sisters—the counsel of my Brethren, as well as the beautiful music and the opening prayer, have made this a most inspirational meeting.

The Lord has sustained me

When I was called to be a General Authority twenty-three years ago, my response in this beautiful Tabernacle was: "I have love in my heart this morning, President McKay, for you and my brethren that are presiding over the affairs of the kingdom of God, and I have love in my heart for my fellowmen. I can truthfully say that I have no enmity nor hatred toward any man, and I pray that the Lord will sustain me in this position" (in Conference Report, Oct, 1960, p. 47).

Yes, the Lord has truly sustained me in this position, for which I am truly grateful.

At the October 1976 general conference, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve restructured the First Quorum of the Seventy. I have served as one of the Presidency of this quorum for the past seven years. This has been a choice experience as our quorum of forty-seven members has served in many capacities both at the headquarters of the Church and throughout the world. I commend them for their dedication and effective service.

With humble hearts and firm commitment

As has just been explained, I have been called to be the president of the

Washington (D.C.) Temple, and my wife, Helen, has been called to serve as matron of the temple.

We are grateful for the confidence placed in us by our Father in Heaven, the First Presidency, and our Brethren.

We approach this assignment with humble hearts and with full commitment to devote our best efforts to the building of the kingdom of God.

A message of peace

We are living in a period in which there are wars and rumors of wars among nations and much hatred, conflict, and contention among people.

It seems to me the most pressing need in the world today is peace—not only among nations, but also within families and in our social and business relationships.

From the Passover Feast of nineteen centuries ago came this great message of promise and exhortation from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace (see Isaiah 9:6), and his message is a message of peace to the individual and to the world. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of life that will restore peace to the world, remove inner tensions and troubles, and bring happiness to the human soul. It is the greatest philosophy of life ever given to man.

Need for peacemakers

A mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to establish this peace and happiness in the hearts and homes of the people.

Certainly one of the greatest messages given to man by Jesus Christ is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Practically all of the basic principles in man's relationship with others are contained in this great sermon.

Part of this sermon is referred to as the Beatitudes, and these begin with the word *Blessed*. These Beatitudes outline conditions which bring about peace and happiness. In this great sermon, the Savior admonished all to be peacemakers as he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). *Blessed* means happy, favored, and glorified.

If ever there was a time when we needed peacemakers, it is today; today seems to be a most appropriate time to discuss what we might do to assist in establishing peace, at least within our relationships.

Have you ever wondered how you could be a peacemaker? I would like to mention a few possibilities. Really, our opportunities are unlimited.

Certainly in our homes, as well as elsewhere, we can all be peacemakers by exhibiting love and goodwill, thus offsetting the evil of contention, envy, and jealousy. Where misunderstandings exist between children and parents we can encourage adjustments on the part of both. We can pray together for the spirit of peace.

Homes can be seriously disrupted because of family strife. At times, husbands and wives in an atmosphere of contention destroy their own happiness as well as that of their children.

Divorces seem to be continually increasing. Many of these divorces undoubtedly could have been avoided if peacemakers had been involved during periods of strife.

Young adult peacemakers

An interesting example that I was closely associated with and which I have referred to previously was one in which several young adults became peacemakers in their homes.

A very wise bishop called several young people into his office and said to them: "I would like you to help me in an experiment. I would like to prove the impact and influence of one member on the spirit of the family. For one month, I would like each of you to be the peacemaker in your home. Don't say anything about this to your family, but be thoughtful, kind, and considerate. Be an example. Where there is quarreling or bickering among members of your family, do whatever you can to overcome these faults by creating an atmosphere of love, harmony, and helpfulness.

"When you are irritated—and irritations arise in almost every family—control yourself and help the others to control themselves. I would like to see every home in our ward be 'a bit of heaven on earth.' At the end of the month, I would like you to meet with me again and report."

It was a challenge for these young people, and they met the challenge in a wonderful way.

When they reported back to the bishop, remarks such as these were made. One young fellow said: "I had no idea I would have so much influence in my home. It's really been different this last month. I've been wondering if much of the turmoil and strife we used to have was caused by me and my attitudes."

A young lady said: "I guess we were just the normal family with our selfishness causing little daily conflicts. But as I have worked with my brothers and sisters, a lot of this has been eliminated, and there has been a much sweeter spirit in our home. I believe you really have to work at it to have the spirit of peace in your home."

Another young lady reported: "Yes, there has been a much sweeter

and cooperative and unselfish spirit in our home since I began this experiment, but the biggest difference of all has been in me. I've tried hard to be a good example and a peacemaker, and I feel better about myself than I have ever felt. A wonderful feeling of peace has come over me."

Ways to be peacemakers

Brothers and sisters, how would you like to try the bishop's experiment in your home by being a peacemaker for one month? In the words of the bishop, "Where there is quarreling or bickering among the family members, do whatever you can to overcome these faults by creating an atmosphere of love, harmony, and helpfulness. When you are irritated, control yourself and help the others to control themselves."

I can promise you as you try this experiment and become a peacemaker in your home that the rewards will be most gratifying.

Another way we can be a peacemaker both in our home and our social and business relationships is by avoiding criticism.

Did you ever stop to think that every time you criticize, you are judging?

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2).

We can also be a peacemaker by practicing and teaching forgiveness. Jesus was asked how many times one should forgive, and he replied that we should forgive without limit. Forgive him "seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

In modern revelation, the Lord has said, "Inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you" (D&C 82:1).

An important part of forgiving is forgetting. In some ways, being able to forget is almost as valuable as being able to remember.

Again, as one reviews the various areas of life's activities and appreciates the many human inadequacies, the great value of patience is seen as an important part of being a peacemaker.

Sometimes we are misunderstood, even by those who are closest to us. Under such circumstances, patience will develop within us the capacity to accept criticism if warranted or not. The ability to exercise forbearance under provocation means that we are following the Savior's teachings to do good to those that spitefully use us and to turn the other cheek. (See Matthew 5:39, 44.)

Patience is truly a mighty virtue and can be developed as we become peacemakers and make up our mind to be patient within our own life as well as with others.

I am grateful that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ incorporates the remarkable principle of patience. I am most thankful for the patience my Father in Heaven has evidenced with me in my life.

Be a peacemaker

In dedicating the Hyde Park chapel in London, among other things President McKay said: "If you want peace, yours is the responsibility to obtain it" (*Church News*, 11 Mar. 1961, p. 15).

Brothers and sisters, it is important to appreciate that the gospel has to be lived in order to be fully realized and its power received.

I bear you my testimony that peace can be enjoyed by individuals, families, and society in general, as well as by nations as we live the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

I rejoice in my knowledge that God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, live and appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power to act in the name of God has been restored and the Church reestablished on the earth and,

further, that President Spencer W. Kimball is a living prophet. May the Lord's choicest blessings be with him, and may we have the courage and good judgment to follow his counsel and advice.

May each of us in our daily lives assume the role of peacemaker that we may enjoy the peace that surpasseth all understanding, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Franklin D. Richards. I should just like to say that Elder Richards has done a tremen-

dous thing; he has rendered a great service in his capacity as Senior President of the First Quorum of the Seventy since that quorum was first organized. I'm sure that the prayers of all of us go with him as he undertakes his great new responsibility as president of the Washington (D.C.) Temple. In that capacity, he will continue to go to stake conferences as a General Authority of the Church and render that kind of yeoman service which he has rendered over a period of many years.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.

Bishop H. Burke Peterson

My dear brothers and sisters, this morning I would like to express some feelings that have been going through my mind for some time. I have prayed for the spirit to understand, and to be understood.

An unforgiving and unforgetting spirit

I want to speak of a weakness that has thwarted the spiritual growth of men through the ages. It has affected young and old, rich and poor. Its onward roll is not limited by national boundaries, or race, or creed, or social standing. It affects some who appear to be strong. It affects many who are weak. It poisons the spirit of a person to the point that one is hobbled by its debilitating power. It has the power to drag people to the depths of hell; yet, when released from its hold, they may soar to celestial heights. It has kept many from rising to their full potential. It has been a roadblock to the talented and to the favored. It is one of the most effective tools of Satan. We are speaking of an unforgiving and unforgetting spirit.

There are many today who harbor in the deep recesses of their hearts a canker, a hurt, a feeling of resentment, a dislike, or in some cases even a hate because of unpleasant experiences with past and present associations. Some have been taken advantage of in a business sense. Others have had their feelings hurt by neighbors, or relatives, or friends. A few have been lied to or had a trust of long standing betrayed. Some children, young and now grown, have been offended by harsh or dictatorial parents. Husbands and wives may have deep schisms between them caused by criticism and a resulting resentment. The list of sad experiences goes on and on—yes, it is too long. To those of you who have been nursing the wounds of hurt feelings from the past, even from the little things, I would like to tell an experience which happened some time ago.

The price of revenge

For much of our lives, we lived in central Arizona. Some years ago a group of teenagers from the local high school went on an all-day picnic into

Sunday, October 2, 1983

Second Day

the desert on the outskirts of Phoenix. As some of you know, the desert foliage is rather sparse—mostly mesquite, catclaw, and palo verde trees, with a few cactus scattered here and there. In the heat of the summer, where there are thickets of this desert growth, you may also find rattlesnakes as unwelcome residents. These young people were picnicking and playing, and during their frolicking, one of the girls was bitten on the ankle by a rattlesnake. As is the case with such a bite, the rattler's fangs released venom almost immediately into her bloodstream.

This very moment was a time of critical decision. They could immediately begin to extract the poison from her leg, or they could search out the snake and destroy it. Their decision made, the girl and her young friends pursued the snake. It slipped quickly into the undergrowth and avoided them for fifteen or twenty minutes. Finally, they found it, and rocks and stones soon avenged the infliction.

Then they remembered: their companion had been bitten! They became aware of her discomfort, as by now the venom had had time to move from the surface of the skin deep into the tissues of her foot and leg. Within another thirty minutes they were at the emergency room of the hospital. By then, the venom was well into its work of destruction.

A couple of days later I was informed of the incident and was asked by some young members of the Church to visit their friend in the hospital. As I entered her room, I saw a pathetic sight. Her foot and leg were elevated—swollen almost beyond recognition. The tissue in her limb had been destroyed by the poison, and a few days later it was found her leg would have to be amputated below the knee.

It was a senseless sacrifice, this price of revenge. How much better it would have been if, after the young woman had been bitten, there had been an extraction of the venom

from the leg in a process known to all desert dwellers.

The cleansing process

As I have said, there are those today who have been bitten—or offended, if you will—by others. What can be done? What will you do when hurt by another? The safe way, the sure way, the right way is to look inward and immediately start the cleansing process. The wise and the happy person removes first the impurities from within. The longer the poison of resentment and unforgiveness stays in a body, the greater and longer lasting is its destructive effect. As long as we blame others for our condition or circumstance and build a wall of self-justification around ourselves, our strength will diminish and our power and ability to rise above our situation will fade away. The poison of revenge, or of unforgiving thoughts or attitudes, unless removed, will destroy the soul in which it is harbored.

Henry Home said, "No man ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a greater to himself" (*The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, [Garden City, N.Y.: Standard Book Co., 1957], p. 309).

Loving every person

During World War II there were terrible examples of man's inhumanity to man. After the war was over and the concentration camps were opened, there was much hatred among the weak and emaciated survivors. In one camp, observers noticed a native of Poland who seemed so robust and peaceful they thought he must have only recently been imprisoned. They were surprised to learn that he had been there over six years! Then, they reasoned, he must not have suffered the terrible atrocities to his family members that most of the prisoners had. But in questioning him, they learned how soldiers had come to his city, lined up against a wall his wife, two daughters, and three small

sons, then opened fire with a machine gun. Though he begged to die with them, he had been kept alive because of his knowledge and ability in language translation.

This Polish father said: "I had to decide right then . . . whether to let myself hate the soldiers who had done this. It was an easy decision, really. I was a lawyer. In my practice I had seen . . . what hate could do to people's minds and bodies. Hate had just killed the six people who mattered most to me in the world. I decided then that I would spend the rest of my life—whether it was a few days or many years—loving every person I came in contact with" (George G. Ritchie with Elizabeth Sherrill, *Return from Tomorrow* [Waco, Texas: Chosen Books, 1978], p. 116).

Forgive and be forgiven

The Lord has said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

And he further added: "For he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9).

In other scriptures the Lord has said he would forgive and forget the sins of those who have truly repented. Ofttimes we choose to decide when a person has repented, and when we will forgive. We have been told mankind will be judged on the intent of the heart. No mortal can see into the depth of another. There is only One who can. His is the role of a judge—not ours. If you are prone to criticize or judge, remember, we never see the target a man aims at in life. We see only what he hits.

From Moroni we read:

"And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ,

see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged" (Moroni 7:18).

The Savior's example

Forgiveness of others for wrongs—imaginary or real—often does more for the forgiver than for the forgiven. That person who has not forgiven a wrong or an injury has not yet tasted of one of the sublime enjoyments of life. The human soul seldom reaches such heights of strength or nobility as when it removes all resentments and forgives error or malice. No one can be classed as a true follower of the Savior who is not in the process of removing from his heart and mind every feeling of ill will, bitterness, hatred, envy, or jealousy toward another.

The greatest example of one who willingly forgave walked the shores of Galilee two thousand years ago. If any person had been mistreated, it was he. President Spencer W. Kimball wrote of the Savior:

"All his life he had been the victim of ugliness. As a newborn infant he had been spirited away to save his life at the instruction of an angel in a dream. . . . At the end of a hectic life he had stood in quiet, restrained divine dignity. . . .

"They pushed him around and jostled him and buffeted him. Not an angry word escaped his lips. . . . They slapped him in his face and on his body. . . . Yet he stood resolute, unimpaired. Literally did he follow his own admonition when he turned his other cheek so that it too could be slapped and smitten.

"Words, too, are hard to take. In-criminations and recriminations and their blasphemy of things, persons, places and situations sacred to him must have been hard to take. . . . Yet he stood his ground, never faltering. No cringing, no denials, no rebuttals. When false, mercenary witnesses were paid to lie about him, he seemed not to condemn them. They twisted his words and misinterpreted his meanings, yet he

was calm and unflustered. Had he not been taught to pray for them 'which despitefully use you'?

"He was beaten, officially scourged. He wore a crown of thorns. . . . He was mocked and jeered. He suffered every indignity at the hands of his own people. . . . He was required to carry his own cross. . . . Finally, with the soldiers and his accusers down below him, he looked upon the Roman soldiers and said these immortal words: '*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*' (Luke 23:34)." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], pp. 279-80).

Plead for the spirit of forgiveness

Now, brothers and sisters, let us go to our homes and dismiss from our beings—and purge from our souls—the venom of any feeling of ill will or bitterness toward anyone. Let us strike from our hearts the unwillingness to forgive and forget; and, instead, approach men in the spirit of the Master, even those who "despitefully use you"

(Matthew 5:44). Let us pray—rather, let us plead for the spirit of forgiveness. Let us look for the good in each other—not the flaws.

The Master knew men's lives would be changed more quickly and more surely by love than by criticism. In 1 John 4:19 we read: "We love him, because he first loved us."

I testify to the importance of this principle of salvation, the principle of forgiving and forgetting, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Lo, My Shepherd Is Divine" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop H. Burke Peterson, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just addressed us. We thank him for his beautiful words. The Choir then sang "Lo, My Shepherd Is Divine."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us, and he will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Recently I had the opportunity of congratulating a special young lady upon her graduation from college. Knowing she had achieved this lofty goal under extreme difficulties, I said, "Would you mind telling me in one word how you were able to achieve this great accomplishment?" While she paused momentarily, words like *courage*, *determination*, and *faith* flashed through my mind as I anticipated her answer. Then without hesitation she said, "Elder Ashton, the word is *commitment*."

"Be something, Abe"

Most of us who have ever heard of the great American leader Abraham

Lincoln will recall what he said of his mother: "All that I am, All that I hope to be, I owe to my Angel mother" (in *Abraham Lincoln's Philosophy of Common Sense*, ed. Edward J. Kempf, 3 parts [New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1965], 1:60). But how many of us know what his mother's last words to him were? They were "Be something, Abe."

Not only is this wise counsel, but it also expresses the yearnings of most fathers' and mothers' hearts to have their children be something. Simple terms, but, oh, how powerful, "Be something." I am so pleased she didn't say, "Be someone." She said, "Be something, Abe." There is a significant difference. In the dictionary *someone* is

defined as "conceived or thought of, but not definitely known," while *something* is identified as "a person or thing of importance."

Abraham Lincoln's mother knew her son, his potential, and the rocky roads ahead of him; hence, she wanted him to commit himself promptly to being steadfast and immovable in living and promoting deeds of courage and faith in the lives of all mankind.

A word of hope is poured out on every generation of people by those who advocate accomplishment, an exemplary life, living up to one's abilities, and keeping one's commitments.

Commitment to worthy goals and gospel principles

True happiness is not made in getting something. True happiness is becoming something. This can be done by being committed to lofty goals. We cannot become something without commitment.

Commitment as a word cannot stand alone. We must always ask, "Committed to what?" As all of us blend into the programs of the Church, it behooves us to set goals for ourselves in order to reap the blessings of self-improvement and excellent performance in given assignments.

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

"But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned" (D&C 58:27-29).

As we search for good causes, we must consider our own needs, but also we must live in compliance with gospel teachings.

Is it I?

President Spencer W. Kimball at the Regional Representatives Seminar of April 3, 1975, said, "I believe in goals, but I believe that the individual should set his own. Goals should always be made to a point that will make us reach and strain. Success should not necessarily be gauged by always reaching the goal set, but by progress and attainment."

In setting our own goals we need to examine our own needs and abilities. The direction in which we are moving is more important than where we are at the moment. Goal setting should cause us to stretch as we make our way.

Self-examination is most difficult. Surveys have shown that most people take credit for success to themselves, but blame their failures on external forces or other people. It would be well, when confronted with problems, to be able to ask the same questions the Twelve Apostles asked during the Last Supper.

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

"And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:20-22).

When our progress seems to be at a standstill, it is well for us to ask who is at fault. Is it I? Am I sufficiently committed to righteous goals? Do I have the courage, fortitude, and wisdom to apply self-examination—or will I be inclined to try and decide which of my associates will fail?

Positive motivation to total commitment

William Clement Stone, a Chicago millionaire, in an interview said, "Only if you have drive, the push, 'the want to' will you succeed in any field." He went on to say, "Regardless of your religious beliefs, read the Bible, the

most inspirational book of all time. And learn to employ the power of prayer." This man had learned the value of commitment. He had the "want to." He had also learned to turn to God for direction, guidance, and help.

Many people are motivated by spiritual goals. The question is, "For what reasons?" Is it because of good feelings and promised rewards, or is it because of fear of not living the commandments? The best motivation is toward the positive. Total commitment to correct gospel principles brings joy, satisfaction, and the abundant life.

Dale Carnegie once said, "If you are not in the process of becoming the person you want to be, you are automatically engaged in becoming the person you don't want to be."

Genius, power, and magic

However, we must realize not all problems of life can be solved at once. A commitment to solve our daily needs and the reaching of immediate lesser goals will bring meaningful successes. Realize that God will judge you by the way you make use of all your possibilities. It is wise and proper to want to make the most of every opportunity, but don't quit or weep because of failure or disappointments. Break down big commitments into smaller ones that you can handle. Then self-esteem will grow and commitment toward goals of greater magnitude will become possible. The journey of success is long and is dotted with a series of commitments to worthy goals. A person does not become committed to worthwhile goals just by making the declaration or decision. It must be daily progression toward established purposes.

When one is wholly committed, added strengths and talents become evident. Assistance comes from unexpected sources. Who of us has not accepted some assignment with fear and trepidation, feeling totally inadequate to take on such a responsibility? But with concern and obedience we

move forward—working hard and praying often. As the task is completed, to our surprise, we have been successful. We humbly realize that our own abilities have been added upon.

Goethe wrote, "What you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it" (*Faust: Vorspiel auf dem Theater*, 1:227, as translated by John Anster, *Faustus, a Dramatic Mystery: Prelude at the Theatre*, 1:303, 1835). We would add that commitment has genius, power, and magic in it.

The scriptures say it this way: "For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

See beauties and thrills, not flaws

A truly committed person does not falter in the face of adversity. Until one is committed, there is a chance to hesitate, to go off in another direction, or to be ineffective. Members within our ranks who are committed to living the gospel of Jesus Christ will not be affected by the rationale of hecklers.

Our enemies are becoming more hostile with each passing week. They seem intent on not only deceiving the uncommitted among us but on leading astray even the elect. They criticize our leaders. They scoff at what we consider to be sacred. They mock ordinances and covenants we know to be true and holy. They delight in discovering and sharing human flaws and frailties among our leaders past and present rather than acknowledging and benefiting from the truths they taught. They go to the tree, and instead of enjoying the fruit thereof, they point out the scars discovered on the tree trunk.

Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked. (See Galatians 6:7.) We have no intention of quarreling or demanding equal time to refute. We invite the dissenters as well as all others to open their eyes and see the beauties and

thrills available to those who walk in His path looking for the good.

For example, it is a sad day in the life of any individual or group when by present training, attitude, and design, they would go to a football game and judge the participants by the dirt and grime on their uniforms rather than by how many tackles were made or yards gained.

By the same token, where is the pleasure for these same people who, attending a big league baseball game, will not cheer or clap for the home run hitter who drives in the winning runs but would rather dwell upon the fact that when the star, according to their research, was in grade school he was kept after school for misconduct? Woe unto those who feast on the dirt and the distasteful instead of the fruits.

Use Christ as master teacher

Contrast those attitudes with that demonstrated by an elderly widow acquaintance of ours who travels to the temple every morning, spends the day attending sessions, and returns home by bus tired and worn just because "I love everyone, even those I cannot see." Her attendance record? "I go every day it is open. Sometimes when I don't feel too strong it is difficult, but I make it somehow." The word is *commitment*.

We all have eyes, ears, and minds to lift, lead, and love. Total commitment to God and His ways will not permit us to engage in destructive criticism, retaliation, or undue disgust. We should commit ourselves to marching shoulder to shoulder in the battle to save souls—without destroying, condemning, or belittling.

With Paul's conversion came commitment. Joseph Smith placed commitment ahead of life itself. From the time of his first vision until his martyrdom, he was a victim of bitter persecution, reviling, and ridicule, but never did he falter in spite of extreme adversity. As he recorded his story, he wrote:

"However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related . . . when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad. . . . But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had. . . .

"So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. . . . For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:24–25).

Certainly neither the Apostle Paul nor Joseph Smith waived, though they faced severe trials. As mentioned earlier, in our present day there are many who are sowing seeds of dissension and discord. With half truths and slander, they are endeavoring to lead members of the Church of Jesus Christ into apostasy. Sometimes I wonder just how Christian it is to call someone else un-Christian, when we are referring to his conduct. Those who are firmly committed to living the gospel of Jesus Christ will not be confused, confounded, or led astray.

If we profess to be Latter-day Saints, let us be committed to living like Latter-day Saints, using Jesus Christ as our master teacher.

Not far enough

It is not too late to commit ourselves to living the gospel totally while here on earth. Each day we must be committed to lofty Christian performance because commitment to the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ is essential to our eternal joy and happi-

ness. The time to commit and recommit is now.

I'm thinking of a five-year-old boy who fell out of bed during the night and came crying to his mother's bedside. To her question, "Why did you fall out of bed?" he replied, "I fell out because I wasn't in far enough!"

It has been my experience over the years that, generally speaking, those who fall out of the Church are those who aren't in far enough.

In a simple statement, the difference between those committed and those who are not is the difference between the words *want* and *will*. For example, "I want to pay tithing, but our funds are so limited," or "I will pay my tithing." "I want to go to sacrament meeting if I have time," or "I will go to sacrament meeting." "I would like to be a good teacher, but the children are so noisy," or "I will be a good teacher."

Commitment to God, the Savior, and the Church

To reap the full benefits of life, we must fill our days with commitment to worthy goals and principles. There is no other way. As these commitments lead us to action, we will find added growth and dimension which will guide us toward a productive life here on earth and open the door for eternal life with our Father in Heaven.

The word is *commitment*. To be something, we must be committed.

God is our Father. Jesus is our Savior, and this is His Church. May we commit ourselves to living Christlike lives regardless of the environment or opposition I pray, in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker this morning.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio, television, and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now conclude this morning's service, singing "Then comes the quiet of Christ to me" ("When Rooks Fly Homeward").

The benediction will be pronounced by Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "When Rooks Fly Homeward."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

We extend our love and blessings to President Spencer W. Kimball, who is watching the proceedings of this session on television in his Hotel Utah apartment, and to President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 153rd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders James M. Paramore and F. Burton Howard preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!" The invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "As the Hart Yearns." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "As the Hart Yearns."

Elder Howard W. Hunter

To parents with feelings of guilt and unworthiness

General Authorities have the privilege of meeting and getting acquainted with members of the Church all over the world who have consistently lived good lives and raised their families in the influence of the gospel. These Saints have enjoyed the great blessings and comfort that can come from looking back, as parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, over long and successful parenting efforts. Surely this is something each of us would like.

However, there are many in the Church and in the world who are living with feelings of guilt and unworthiness because some of their sons and daughters have wandered or strayed from the fold. My remarks today are directed primarily to those mothers and fathers.

Rare not to make errors

At the outset we understand that conscientious parents try their best, yet nearly all have made mistakes. One does not launch into such a project as parenthood without soon realizing that there will be many errors along the way. Surely our Heavenly Father

knows, when he entrusts his spirit children into the care of young and inexperienced parents, that there will be mistakes and errors in judgment.

For every set of parents there are many "first-time" experiences that help to build wisdom and understanding, but each such experience results from the plowing of new ground, with the possibility that errors might be made. With the arrival of the first child the parents must make decisions about how to teach and train, how to correct and discipline. Soon there is the first day at school and the first bicycle. Then follows the first date of the first teenager, the first problem with school grades, and possibly, the first request to stay out late or the first request to buy a car.

It is a rare father or mother indeed who travels the difficult path of parenting without making errors along the way, especially at these first-time milestones when experience and understanding are somewhat lacking. Even after the parent has gained experience, the second-time and third-time occurrences of these milestones are sometimes not much easier to handle, nor do they come with much less chance of error.

Influences on children

What more challenging responsibility is there than working effectively with young people? There are numerous variables that determine the character and the personality of a child. It is probably true that parents are, in many or perhaps most cases, the greatest influence in shaping the life of a child, but sometimes there are other influences that also are very significant. No one knows the degree to which heredity influences lives, but certainly brothers and sisters, friends and teachers, neighbors and Scoutmasters have significant effects.

We know, too, that the influences on a child are not restricted to heredity or to people; certainly, things in the physical surroundings will have their effect—such as the house and the play-

things, the yard and the neighborhood. Playgrounds and basketballs, dresses and cars—or the lack of these—all have their influence on the child.

One must conclude that—with the multitude of influences and the innumerable decisions, each with so many alternatives to consider and evaluate—even though parents strive to choose wisely, an unwise choice will sometimes be made. It is almost impossible to always say and do the right thing at every point along the way. I think we would agree that as parents we have made mistakes which have had a negative effect on the attitude of the child or on his progress. On the other hand, parents usually do the right thing or make the right decision under the circumstances, yet boys and girls often have negative responses to right or correct decisions.

Not alone

If a parent has made what could be considered an error—or, on the other hand, has never made a mistake, but still the lamb has wandered from the fold—in either case there are several thoughts I would like to share with you.

First, such a father or mother is not alone. Our first parents knew the pain and suffering of seeing some of their children reject the teachings of eternal life. (See Moses 5:27.) Centuries later Jacob came to know of the jealousy and ill feelings of his older sons toward his beloved Joseph. (See Genesis 37:1-8.) The great prophet Alma, who had a son named Alma, prayed at length to the Lord regarding the rebellious attitude of his son and no doubt was overwhelmed with concern and worry about the dissension and the wickedness his son was causing among those who were within the Church. (See Mosiah 27:14.) Our Father in Heaven has also lost many of his spirit children to the world; he knows the feelings of your heart.

Errors of judgment and the principle of repentance

Second, we should remember that errors of judgment are generally less serious than errors of intent.

Third, even if there was a mistake made with full knowledge and understanding, there is the principle of repentance for release and comfort. Rather than constantly dwelling on what we perceive as a mistake or a sin or a failure to the detriment of our progress in the gospel or our association with family and friends, it would be better for us to turn away from it. As with any mistake, we may repent by being sorrowful and by attempting to correct or rectify the consequences, to whatever extent possible. We should look forward with renewed faith.

Don't give up hope, and know where responsibility lies

Fourth, don't give up hope for a boy or a girl who has strayed. Many who have appeared to be completely lost have returned. We must be prayerful and, if possible, let our children know of our love and concern.

Fifth, remember that ours was not the only influence that contributed to the actions of our children, whether those actions were good or bad.

Sixth, know that our Heavenly Father will recognize the love and the sacrifice, the worry and the concern, even though our great effort has been unsuccessful. Parents' hearts are oftentimes broken, yet they must realize that the ultimate responsibility lies with the child after parents have taught correct principles.

Be careful in judgments

Seventh, whatever the sorrow, whatever the concern, whatever the pain and anguish, look for a way to turn it to beneficial use—perhaps in helping others to avoid the same problems, or perhaps by developing a greater insight into the feelings of others who are struggling in a similar way. Surely we

will have a deeper understanding of the love of our Heavenly Father when, through prayer, we finally come to know that he understands and wants us to look forward.

The eighth and final point of reminder is that everyone is different. Each of us is unique. Each child is unique. Just as each of us starts at a different point in the race of life, and just as each of us has different strengths and weaknesses and talents, so each child is blessed with his own special set of characteristics. We must not assume that the Lord will judge the success of one in precisely the same way as another. As parents we often assume that, if our child doesn't become an over-achiever in every way, we have failed. We should be careful in our judgments.

Responsibilities of parenthood

Let us not misunderstand. The responsibilities of parenthood are of the greatest importance. The results of our efforts will have eternal consequences for us and the boys and girls we raise. Anyone who becomes a parent is under strict obligation to protect and love his children and assist them to return to their Heavenly Father. All parents should understand that the Lord will not hold guiltless those who neglect these responsibilities.

After the Exodus and while Israel was in the wilderness, Moses, in teaching his people, instructed them that the commandments of the Lord should be taught by parents to their children in the home. He said to them:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Don't ruin your life

We should never let Satan fool us into thinking that all is lost. Let us take pride in the good and right things we have done; reject and cast out of our lives those things that are wrong; look to the Lord for forgiveness, strength, and comfort; and then move onward.

A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother.

My concern today is that there are parents who may be pronouncing harsh judgments upon themselves and may be allowing these feelings to destroy their lives, when in fact they have done their best and should continue in faith. That all who are parents might find joy in their efforts with their children is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Sorrow and suffering

There are many kinds of sorrow and suffering:

- Self-inflicted suffering
- Suffering from infirmities of our mortal bodies and sorrow from separation by death.
- Suffering that tries and tests us
- Suffering to develop our spiritual strength
- Suffering to humble us and lead us to repentance
- The Savior's suffering and atoning sacrifice, the most important event in the history of the world.

But if our sorrow and suffering strengthen our faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ, "[our] sorrow shall be turned [to] joy" (John 16:20).

Can hurt loved ones most

Thirty years ago, as a branch president, I was interviewing a man and

his wife. The wife was tearing down her husband; he had not been the provider she had expected; he had not been the companion she had dreamed about before her marriage; they could not communicate together without arguing and attacking one another.

Her husband loved her, and yet she hurt him. There were tears in his eyes as he absorbed the verbal abuse. I couldn't take any more as a twenty-one-year-old branch president, and asked, "Why do you hurt this person who loves you the most? Why do you hurt a husband who would do anything to help you?"

Her answer startled me. "Oh, I guess we argue and injure those we love because we can hurt them the most."

I have never forgotten that incident. There is truth in that example. We can't hurt a stranger as much as we can a loved one. We know just what to do to hurt our companions, parents, or brothers and sisters. We know where

they are vulnerable. We know how they can be hurt the most by our actions. To many it seems to be a test of faith in life to be wounded by those closest to us. Of Jesus it is said in Zechariah that when asked where he had received the wounds in his hands, he would say that he "was wounded in the house of [his] friends" (Zechariah 13:6). Isn't it true that God, our Father, and his Son grieve when we sin? When we fail to be obedient and accept the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, aren't we hurting Him who loves us most?

Sorrow can be turned to joy

On one occasion Elder LeGrand Richards, who was being helped into a wheelchair a little against his will, turned to the younger General Authorities and said, "You, too, will grow old, if you live long enough." I observe my eighty-two-year-old mother—paralyzed the past eight years—and my eighty-four-year-old father—who is an artist, whose test of suffering is dimmed eyesight—and realize the joy they will receive when they receive perfect immortal bodies. The suffering in mortality will bring a greater appreciation of the blessings of a resurrected, perfect body. Also, our joy of service in helping our parents in time of need brings us a greater appreciation for one another.

We are told that out of suffering, sorrow, and sadness that joy will come. Sometimes we cannot understand that mortal suffering can bring eternal blessings. Jesus told his Apostles:

"A little while, and ye shall not see me. . . .

"I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:16, 20).

Jesus likened this to a woman's travail and suffering before her hour of delivery: as soon as she gives birth, "she remembereth no more the anguish" (John 16:21).

Savior's visit in spirit world

After the Crucifixion, the earth was rent by earthquakes and eruptions that caused death and destruction. (See Matthew 27:51.) How could those who experienced such suffering have any comprehension of the joyous scene described by President Joseph F. Smith's vision of the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead in the spirit world while his body lay in the tomb?

"All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

"I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

"They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.

"Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy.

"While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful;

"And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance" (D&C 138:14–19).

Suffering tries and tests

Oh, there's the suffering that tries and tests us. Job, a perfect man was tested and tried by Satan. Job's friends assumed his suffering was a result of sin, but the scriptures tell us he "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22). Nor should we charge God foolishly for our own suf-

ferings or assume we know the cause of another's suffering.

Suffering to develop strength will not exceed our ability to endure to the end.

When Joseph Smith was in Liberty Jail, he cried to the Lord for comfort, and the Lord gave it to him. He said that "if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

Such trials give us the development of spirituality that we probably never would get if we didn't have the experience where the very jaws of hell gape open their mouth wide after us. Not only must we survive, but we must develop the ability to have a concern for others while we are suffering. It is a key element in our spiritual growth. As we lose our lives in the service of our fellowmen, we find ourselves.

Jesus gave us the perfect example at Gethsemane when he forgave the Apostles who slept while he bled at every pore for all our sins. He only asked, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). Jesus also expressed concern for his mother's care as he suffered on the cross. And even while he was suffering, he taught the gospel to those who were suffering next to him. (See John 19:26-27.)

One of the greatest examples in my life happened when I was a brand-new General Authority on my first assignment. One of the General Authorities had a wife who had passed away just a few days before. I walked onto the airplane and there he was, sitting on the front row of the airplane. What a great message! I was moved by it because at the time I said to myself, "How can one who is suffering go out to help others?" He talked to me about how difficult it was for him to go on assignment, but he went to give succor and helped others when he was hurting.

Suffering is universal; how we react to suffering is individual. Suffering can take us one of two ways. It can be a strengthening and purifying experi-

ence combined with faith, or it can be a destructive force in our lives if we do not have faith in the Lord's atoning sacrifice. The purpose of suffering, however, is to build and strengthen us. We learn obedience by the things we suffer. We should be humbled and drawn to the Lord, as in the case of the prodigal son who appreciated his home only after going into the world and experiencing sorrow when he shut out his loved ones. (See Luke 15:11-32.) So suffering in his case was a vital part of his repentance.

Repentance

When suffering comes as a consequence of sin, it should lead to repentance. Alma testified to his son Helaman:

"And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

"Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

"And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

"And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!" (Alma 36:17-20).

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

After a number of mistakes and failures to live as we know we should, we may lose confidence in ourselves and have a poor self-image of who we are and what we are capable of becoming. We may forget that we are children of God and have the potential of dwelling with him and his Son if we accept

the Atonement and keep the commandments.

The first of the commandments we must keep is to have faith. First, we must gain faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith that he lives. Faith that he hears and answers prayers. Faith that he will forgive us of our transgressions. Faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The atoning sacrifice

Why is the Savior's atonement so important as the central gospel principle in the Church and in our lives?

Jesus was born of heavenly parents in a premortal world—he was the firstborn of our Heavenly Father. In mortality, the Babe of Bethlehem's birth and life, concluding with the atoning sacrifice, was prophesied by ancient prophets in all dispensations. Only he could make the atoning sacrifice—having received the power over death from his Father. He overcame death, the grave's power was nullified, and he became our Savior, Mediator, and Master of the Resurrection—a means of salvation and immortality to all of us. We will all be resurrected and become immortal because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In the study of the Atonement, most of us have probably asked the question, "Why is it so easy for the world to see and believe that in Adam all men died and were cast out from the presence of our Heavenly Father, yet it is so hard for the world to understand how Jesus Christ can bring us back in the same manner?" The scriptures are clear on this.

"For as by one man's disobedience [Adam] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. . . .

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:19, 21).

"He will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which

bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that he may know according to the flesh, . . . that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance" (Alma 7:12-13).

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16-17).

I stand all amazed at the love

Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully
he proffers me;

I tremble to know that for me he
was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered,
he bled and died.

I marvel that he would descend
from his throne divine
To rescue a soul so rebellious and
proud as mine;
That he should extend his great
love unto such as I,
Sufficient to own, to redeem, and
to justify.

I think of his hands pierced and
bleeding to pay the debt!
Such mercy, such love, and
devotion can I forget?
No, no, I will praise and adore at
the mercy seat,
Until at the glorified throne I kneel
at his feet.
Oh, it is wonderful that he should
care for me,
Enough to die for me!
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to
me!
("I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*,
no. 80.)

It is my prayer that our sorrow and suffering will strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that our sorrow shall be turned to joy, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder William R. Bradford

Heavenly Father gave us a plan

I proclaim unto you that I know there is a God in the heaven. He is our Father. We are His children, begotten in His image and likeness. We are His seed and have the potential within us to become as He is.

For this to happen, our Heavenly Father prepared a plan. An earth would be created upon which our spirits could be born into physical bodies, a place where we could have experiences that would teach and test us, a place to develop the godly potential within us. Here we, the seed of God, can mature into the product of the harvest of the Father's work, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

The plan provides us with the needed resources and instruction to become as He is. By obedience we may become lawful heirs to the quality of life He lives and to a fulness of that which He possesses.

Our Father taught us the plan in our pre-earthly life. He gave us free agency to choose for ourselves whether or not we would accept the plan. The fact that we are here on the earth with physical bodies is *prima facie* evidence that we did accept it.

Lucifer brought sin and transgression

However, others of God's children chose not to accept the plan. Led by Lucifer, they rebelled against our Father and sought to gain power and glory through force. They were defeated in this attempt and were cast out

of the Father's presence. They are here upon the earth without physical bodies. They are still led by Lucifer, who became Satan, the devil. They are not involved in developing godly potentials; rather, they are continually struggling to influence man to misuse the resources and to disobey the instructions of our Father. Even more insidious is their relentless influence to deceive man into doing nothing with the resources and remaining ignorant of the instructions. Through this influence have come sin and transgression: sins of commission and sins of omission.

Death and separation

We refer to the instructions the Father has given us as commandments. It is because of sin and the transgression of these commandments that man becomes sensual, devilish, and fallen man. (See D&C 20:20.)

"Fallen man" means that man is subject to death and separation from God. When death comes to the physical body, the spirit body lives on, separated from the presence of God. Thus, the condition of fallen man is death and separation.

"How do you know?"

What I have said, I declare in soberness to be true. I declare it to the receptive ear, to those who also know it is true. I declare it, unashamedly, to the doubting ear, to those who would mock and scorn, as we can imagine could have been the case when the declarations fell from the lips of Noah and the people surely demanded from him

an answer: "How do you know? How do you know?" I declare it to the slumbering, who, in their ignorance of God's plan and their darkness of mind, can but think the question, "How do you know? How do you know?"

Messages of the Book of Mormon

I hold in my hand the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ. This book has cost the sacrifice, even the lives, of countless thousands to preserve and bring forth. Its coming forth is part of the marvelous restoration by God of His resources and His instruction to His children.

Now that we have the Book of Mormon, which has been inspired, protected, and delivered by divine powers into our hands—now that we can read it—to our amazement we find that one of the two major messages it contains for us is the record of a fallen people.

In this book, page after page, story after story, character by character, we are taught that there is a God in the heaven; that He framed the heaven and the earth; that we are His children and He is our Father; that we are begotten in His image and after His likeness; that there is a plan for our becoming as He is; that the plan was challenged by him who rebelled against the Father and who was cast down to the earth to become Satan, the devil, the father of lies and transgression; that our Father allowed our spirit bodies to come to this earth to take upon them physical bodies; that here on earth we may, if we will, obey the Father's commandments, which will qualify us to return to His presence and live the glorious style of life He lives. "But by the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man" (D&C 20:20).

Problem: Man transgressed holy commandments

Yes, it is with amazement that we discover that one of the two major messages in the Book of Mormon is the

record of a fallen people; but that amazement turns to gratitude as we realize that God is explaining the truism that "you can't know the solution if you don't first understand the problem."

The problem is that man has transgressed the holy commandments of God and has become fallen man, to suffer death and everlasting separation from the presence of God.

Solution: Fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ

But this Book of Mormon contains a second message. It contains the solution. It contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as the doctrine of fallen man lays before us the fulness of our fallen condition, so does the gospel of Jesus Christ lay before us the fulness of the way to overcome that condition. It is the solution.

Central to the gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of redemption. God gave His children commandments that they "should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship" (D&C 20:19). By the transgression of these holy laws came the Fall; "wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son" (D&C 20:21).

The Resurrection and the Atonement

He came to the earth and did a work. He fulfilled the requirements of the plan of redemption. The work He did brought about the resurrection, meaning the reuniting of our spirit bodies with a renewed physical body.

The work He did was an atonement which opens again the way for us to reach our potential as the seed of God. Now, although we have become fallen man, if we repent and obey the commandments, we can return to our Father's presence:

"And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone

for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory" (Alma 22:14).

The need for a savior

If you had a son, your very own seed, would you not want him to mature into the fulness of his potential? While he was yet young and tender, would you not give him teachings, instruction, even commandments? Would these commandments not be to protect him from harm and evil, even death?

If, by his disobedience to your teachings and commandments, he fell into a situation from which he had no power to extract himself—a situation in which he would surely die, a situation from which, without help, he could not return to be in your companionship—would you not do all in your power to bring about his salvation?

God is our Father. We are His children. In our state as fallen man, He has sent a savior. He is Jesus Christ.

Since all men have sinned, there is not one who can return to the Father except through Jesus Christ. He is the only one of the Father's children who has not transgressed the holy laws. If He had, He too would have become fallen man. If this had happened, who would be our savior? But Christ is sinless, and He has brought about our atonement on the terms of our repentance and obedience.

His own declaration comes to us by way of stern commandment:

"Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, . . .

"And it is by my almighty power that you have received them" (D&C 19:13-14).

Did we not receive the Book of Mormon from the Lord by the hand of Joseph Smith, God's mighty prophet of the Restoration?

Christ, speaking to the Nephite nation as revealed to us in the Book of Mormon, gave us further instruction regarding the steps we must take to overcome our condition as fallen man. Said He:

"And I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.

"And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

"And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned" (3 Nephi 11:32-34).

To be damned simply means to be stopped in your progress. It means to remain in the condition of fallen man.

Christ continues:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with . . . the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 11:35).

Another testament of Jesus Christ

I ask you to ponder the question, "How can anyone understand the role of, or the need for, a savior if he does not first understand what it is he must be saved from?"

The Book of Mormon contains the record of a fallen people. It outlines how man got into a condition which subjects him to death and separation from God.

The Book of Mormon also contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It outlines for us in perfect clarity what has been done for us and what we must do ourselves to overcome our fallen condition and return to the presence of God.

Now, O fallen man, with so great a witness, do you yet dare to ask, "How do you know? How do you know?"

The Book of Mormon holds out to us a fulness of what we must be saved from. It gives us a complete under-

standing of the role of, and the need for, a savior. It is another testament of Jesus Christ, which I proclaim and testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Sev-

enty, has just addressed us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "Ye Simple Souls Who Stray."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

The Choir and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

Elder Richard G. Scott

I have been deeply humbled by the call that has come to serve as one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of the Seventy. I have talked to the Lord about it and have promised him I would give him everything I have for that service. I have pled with him that he will help me qualify to receive his inspiration and support, so that I may do his will and that of his servants.

I have prayed earnestly that the Lord would guide me to say that which would benefit some of his children here on earth. After considerable effort on my part, there have come a series of impressions and a sacred feeling that somewhere there are those to whom I can provide much-needed help from the Lord. I pray that I may faithfully communicate those impressions, so that they will sink deeply into the consciousness of the individuals to whom they are intended and there find permanent root. May they transmit the Lord's love and his desire to show you how to get help urgently needed to bring purpose and happiness into your life.

The Savior knows you

I do not know who you are. Perhaps you are one in maturing years who, because of long physical illness or growing feelings of loneliness, has begun to express bitterness and self-pity.

Perhaps you are a young man or woman struggling with serious misunderstandings within the family circle. You may be a husband estranged from your wife or a single-parent mother with the frightening task of raising children without a loving, understanding, supportive companion. Perhaps you are a choice, obedient daughter who with each passing day is concerned that life-long dreams of eternal companionship seem to be slipping away. Whoever you are, I solemnly testify that the Savior knows you; he loves you and is aware of your specific needs.

He allows others to help him in his work. May I be such an instrument today.

Service to others

I will share one principle of truth which, if applied, can open the door to all the others you need to lift your spirit. It is a principle that will give you the power to make a difference in the quality of your own life.

I speak of service—self-sacrificing service to others in need. I know it is hard to help another when you feel you have been wronged. I know it is difficult to take the first step when your own heart aches for companionship or yearns for understanding. Yet such acts of service open to us

the mercy and love of Jesus Christ, the Master.

When light goes out

Free agency is a divine gift, and God will not override it. Because of free agency, we must take the first step. Our initial acts of kindness or service to others provide us with channels of inspiration and power. In contrast, darkness and despair close in when the light of love and service dims or goes out within us. Feelings of bitterness and dissatisfaction feed upon themselves and give place to thoughts and acts of unkindness, criticism, and eventually even hatred.

I vividly recall a couple who came for counsel. She was in the final stages of divorce, and he was bitter with resentment. Gone were the flowering petals of love that had given such meaning and purpose to their courtship. Shattered was the trust that once served as a sacred bond to draw them together. The ugly entanglement of selfishness was strangling what was left of the few remaining feelings of mutual respect. I listened privately to one and then the other. Their story was all too familiar. "I love her, but do not want to be trampled upon." "I'm grateful for what he does, but if I show the least gratitude, he thinks all our differences are resolved, and I am submerged again."

Their problems were further complicated by economic pressures. Yet, as I listened to each separately, I could see that the means they tenaciously held individually, if shared selflessly, could have solved their financial difficulties. I could see in each admirable characteristics. There was a sincere testimony of truth, a desire to do right, and an anxiety to feel at peace with the Lord for the decisions about to be taken.

He had honestly tried to show love and affection and had done much to help her, but in every case these righteous gestures were destroyed by simultaneously expressed feelings of concern for self. In his own words, "I do not want her to take advantage of

me." She restrained the honest feelings of gratitude in her heart for his help with the children and home and said nothing. They had not the courage, nor the vision, to build one another.

Three things to mend and heal

Two individuals trapped in the cross fire of intense feelings rarely can think clearly or be properly motivated. They need help, and the best source of help is the Savior. Oh, how I pray they will use the principles we discussed to reach out, to lift, to build, to edify, and to forgive one another.

Three things are required to mend broken lines of communication and to heal hearts that once expressed deep feelings of pure love, respect, and trust.

First, an understanding of the principles which bring happiness in marriage. They have been eloquently stated by President Spencer W. Kimball in many of his messages. Two noteworthy examples are printed in his book entitled *Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978).

Second, a willingness to live worthily and to strive diligently to obey the commandments of God. Such a course allows our hearts and minds to be touched by divine guidance, and our efforts to be magnified by power from on high.

Third, a sincere, selfless desire to build the other. This requires an analysis of one's own life, to identify and change those things that must be altered so that love and trust can grow and mature and feelings of forgiveness flower.

It also requires a willingness to recognize all that is good and uplifting in one's companion and to set aside the microscopic concentration on faults and defects. Criticism is often motivated by a desire to rationalize one's own shortcomings and to justify termination of sacred marriage covenants.

Build others

If you would be loved, love another. If you would be understood, show understanding to another. If you would find peace, harmony, and happiness, lift another.

Yet, if we build another for selfish reasons, our acts cannot produce desirable fruits. Has not Jesus said:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [Alms are righteous acts.]

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites, . . . that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1-4).

Power of the gospel

I am convinced that when we give unconditional love; when our interest is first in serving, building, edifying, strengthening without thought of self; when we do not expect an automatic return for each act of kindness, generosity, or sincere effort to help; when

we are not concerned about what we will receive or what others will say or whether our own burdens will be diminished, but selflessly seek to build another, the miracle of the power of the gospel is released in our lives. When we permit the Lord to work through us to bless others, that sacred experience releases power in our own lives, and miracles occur. Well did the Master say, "For inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me" (D&C 42:38).

Respect and love must be earned, and there is no better way to earn them than to lift another.

Begin now with your best effort. Reach out to another. You will feel the power of the Lord flow through you. Your own self-respect will return, and you can love yourself again. Your life will be enriched and given purpose, and you will be given the power to make a difference in everything around you. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder Richard G. Scott, a new member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Read, ponder, and pray about Book of Mormon

Two ministers of one of the largest and most powerful Protestant denominations came to a Latter-day Saint conference to hear me preach.

After the meeting I had a private conversation with them, in which I said they could each gain a testimony that Joseph Smith was the prophet through

whom the Lord had restored the fulness of the gospel for our day and for our time.

I told them they should read the Book of Mormon, ponder its great and eternal truths, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, in faith, and he would reveal the truth of the book to them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As every gospel scholar knows, the Book of Mormon proves that

Joseph Smith was called of God to minister in the prophetic office and to restore the truths of salvation in plainness and perfection.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It contains a record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. It is another testament of Jesus Christ.

American witness of Christ

It contains the fulness of the gospel, meaning that it is a record of the Lord's dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel, and meaning also that in it is found a summary and a recitation of what all men must believe and do to gain an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom reserved for the Saints.

As the teachings and testimonies of Moses and Isaiah and Peter find place in the Bible, so the parallel preaching and the same Spirit-guided testimonies of Nephi and Alma and Moroni have come down to us in the Book of Mormon.

This American witness of Christ was written upon gold plates which were delivered to Joseph Smith by an angelic ministrant. This ancient record was then translated by the gift and power of God and is now published to the world as the Book of Mormon.

If this book is what it purports to be—if the original record was revealed by a holy angel; if the translation was made by the power of God and not of man; if Joseph Smith was entertaining angels, seeing visions, and receiving revelations—all of which is an established verity; if the Book of Mormon is true—then the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon proves the truth of this great latter-day work in which we are engaged.

Sincere and devout people

All of this I explained to my two Protestant friends. One of them, a congenial and decent sort of fellow, said

somewhat casually that he would read the Book of Mormon. The other minister, manifesting a bitter spirit, said: "I won't read it. We have experts who have read the Book of Mormon, and I have read what our experts have to say about it."

This account dramatizes one of our problems in presenting the message of the Book of Mormon to the world. There are sincere and devout people everywhere who have heard what other people say about this volume of holy writ, and so they do not read it themselves.

Instead of drinking from that fountain from whence clear streams of living water flow, they prefer to go downstream and drink from the roily, muddy, poison-filled streams of the world.

Door to salvation

The plain fact is that salvation itself is at stake in this matter. If the Book of Mormon is true—if it is a volume of holy scripture, if it contains the mind and will and voice of the Lord to all men, if it is a divine witness of the prophetic call of Joseph Smith—then to accept it and believe its doctrines is to be saved, and to reject it and walk contrary to its teachings is to be damned.

Let this message be sounded in every ear with an angelic trumpet; let it roll round the earth in resounding claps of never-ending thunder; let it be whispered in every heart by the still, small voice. Those who believe the Book of Mormon and accept Joseph Smith as a prophet thereby open the door to salvation; those who reject the book outright or who simply fail to learn its message and believe its teachings never so much as begin to travel that course along the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Read, ponder, and pray to gain witness

Shortly after my experience with these two ministers, two other minis-

ters from the same denomination came to another of our conferences to hear me preach. And, once again, after the meeting I had a private discussion with them.

My message was the same. Taking the Book of Mormon as their guide, they must read, ponder, and pray in order to gain a witness from the Spirit as to the truth and divinity of this great latter-day work.

I told them of my prior experience with their two colleagues and how one of them had refused to read the Book of Mormon, saying that they had experts who had read the book and he had read what their experts had said.

I then said, "What is it going to take to get you gentlemen to read the Book of Mormon and find out for yourselves what is involved, rather than relying on the views of your experts?"

Pray in faith

One of these ministers, holding my copy of the Book of Mormon in his hands, let the pages flip past his eyes in a matter of seconds. As he did so, he said, "Oh, I've read the Book of Mormon."

I had a momentary flash of spiritual insight that let me know that his reading had been about as extensive as the way he had just flipped the pages. In his reading he had done no more than scan a few of the headings and read an isolated verse or two.

A lovely young lady, a convert to the Church whose father was a minister of the same denomination as my four Protestant friends, was listening to my conversation with the second two. At this point she spoke up and said, "But Reverend, you have to pray about it."

He replied, "Oh, I prayed about it. I said, 'Oh God, if the Book of Mormon is true, strike me dead'; and here I am."

My unspoken impulse was to give this rejoinder: "But Reverend, you have to pray in faith!"

Pray, study, ask

This account dramatizes another of our problems in teaching those who read the Book of Mormon how to read it in order to gain the promised witness by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The pattern for this was set in the experience of Oliver Cowdery. He desired not alone to act as a scribe to Joseph Smith but also to translate directly from the plates. After much importuning, the Lord permitted Brother Cowdery to try.

The divine authorization contained these provisos: "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . . And according to your faith shall it be done unto you" (D&C 8:10-11).

Oliver tried to translate and failed. Then came the divine word: "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me." That is, he had not done all that in his power lay; he had expected the Lord to do it all merely because he asked.

"But, behold, I say unto you," the divine word continued, "that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:7-8).

Of the Lord or of Lucifer?

Now, if the Book of Mormon is true, our acceptance of it will lead to salvation in the highest heaven. On the other hand, if we say it is true when in fact it is not, we are thereby leading men astray and surely deserve to drop down to the deepest hell.

The time is long past for quibbling about words and for hurling unsavory epithets against the Latter-day Saints. These are deep and solemn and ponderous matters. We need not think we can

trifle with sacred things and escape the wrath of a just God.

Either the Book of Mormon is true, or it is false; either it came from God, or it was spawned in the infernal realms. It declares plainly that all men must accept it as pure scripture or they will lose their souls. It is not and cannot be simply another treatise on religion; it either came from heaven or from hell. And it is time for all those who seek salvation to find out for themselves whether it is of the Lord or of Lucifer.

A test

May I be so bold as to propose a test and issue a challenge. It is hoped that all who take this test will have a knowledge of the Holy Bible, because the more people know about the Bible, the greater their appreciation will be of the Book of Mormon.

This test is for saint and sinner alike; it is for Jew and Gentile, for bond and free, for black and white, for all of our Father's children. We have all been commanded to search the scriptures, to treasure up the Lord's word, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 84:44.) This, then, is the test:

Let every person make a list of from one hundred to two hundred doctrinal subjects, making a conscious effort to cover the whole field of gospel knowledge. The number of subjects chosen will depend on personal inclination and upon how broad the spectrum will be under each subject.

Then write each subject on a blank piece of paper. Divide the paper into two columns; at the top of one, write "Book of Mormon," and at the top of the other, "Bible."

Then start with the first verse and phrase of the Book of Mormon, and continuing verse by verse and thought by thought, put the substance of each verse under its proper heading. Find the same doctrine in the Old and New Testaments, and place it in the parallel columns.

What think ye of the Book of Mormon?

Ponder the truths you learn, and it will not be long before you know that Lehi and Jacob excel Paul in teaching the Atonement; that Alma's sermons on faith and on being born again surpass anything in the Bible; that Nephi makes a better exposition of the scattering and gathering of Israel than do Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel combined; that Mormon's words about faith, hope, and charity have a clarity, a breadth, and a power of expression that even Paul did not attain; and so on and so on.

There is another and simpler test that all who seek to know the truth might well take. It calls for us simply to read, ponder, and pray—all in the spirit of faith and with an open mind. To keep ourselves alert to the issues at hand—as we do read, ponder, and pray—we should ask ourselves a thousand times, "Could any man have written this book?"

And it is absolutely guaranteed that sometime between the first and thousandth time this question is asked, every sincere and genuine truth seeker will come to know by the power of the Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, that it is the mind and will and voice of the Lord to the whole world in our day.

We ask, then: What think ye of the Book of Mormon? Who can tell its wonder and worth? How many martyrs have suffered death in the flesh to bring it forth and carry its saving message to a wicked world?

God has spoken in our day

We answer: It is a book, a holy book, a book of sacred, saving scripture. It is a voice from the dust, a voice that whispers low out of the earth, telling of a fallen people who sank into an endless oblivion because they forsook their God.

It is truth springing out of the earth as righteousness looks down from heaven. It is the stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, which will guide all

Israel, the ten tribes included, to return to Him whom their fathers worshipped. It contains the word that will gather the whole house of Israel and make them once again one nation upon the mountains of Israel, as it was in the days of their fathers.

It is an account of the ministry of the Son of God to his other sheep in the day they saw his face and heard his voice and believed his word.

It is the divine evidence, the proof, that God has spoken in our day. Its chief purpose is to convince all men, Jew and Gentile alike, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, who manifests himself, by faith, in all ages and among all peoples.

Prepare men for now and for eternity

It came forth in our day proving to the world that the Bible is true; that Jesus, by whom the Atonement came, is Lord of all; that Joseph Smith was called of God, as were the prophets of old; that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the one place on earth where salvation is found.

It is the book that will save the world and prepare the sons of men for joy and peace here and now and everlasting life in eternity.

As it happens, I am one of the many who have come to know, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to my soul, that the Book of Mormon is true. And, knowing that I will be accountable for that witness before the bar of the great Jehovah when he judges all men, I testify that as he lives the Book

of Mormon is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of the general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems which have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, it has been customary for President Kimball to speak at the conclusion of the conference, but because of his age and the infirmities of his health, that is not pos-

sible. I know that you would have appreciated hearing from him. I know likewise that I am a poor substitute. It has been wonderful that he and President Romney have been able to be with

us. Just to see them has lifted the hearts of many, many people.

The spirit of the conference

While we were at lunch, we sat with a man who is now a grandfather who said that his little four-year-old grandson came to him the other day and said, "Grandpa, why do the hummingbirds hum?" Grandpa said, "I don't know. Why?" The little boy said, "Because they don't know the words."

It is unlikely that we will remember very many of the words that we have heard during the meetings of this conference. But I hope that we shall be able to "hum" the spirit of this conference and that we shall carry with us a great feeling of uplift because of our participation together. It has been a glorious time. The Spirit of the Lord has been with us. We have every reason to be grateful. We have been refreshed in our testimonies and strengthened in our faith.

Read and implement the counsel

We have heard sound counsel from the Brethren who have spoken to us. Having heard it, I hope we will read it when the proceedings of the conference are published, and again savor to our benefit that which has been said.

They have testified of our Eternal Father and of his Beloved Son, and they have done so by the power of the Holy Ghost. By that same power they have spoken of the Prophet Joseph and that which came of his faith and industry and calling as a servant of the Lord.

They have counseled us concerning our families, our lives, our affairs. All of us will be the stronger as we implement in our lives and in our homes the things to which we have listened.

Critics mock the sacred

Do not fear concerning the Church. We have had mentioned in this conference some of our critics. They

mock that which is most holy to us. They jest over and hold up to ridicule that which has come by revelation from the Almighty. Any man who tries to find humor at the expense of that which is sacred to another is deeply flawed in character. Shame on those who stoop to such actions in the name of fun and on those who witness and laugh. Simple courtesy would dictate a decent respect for that which is sacred to neighbors and associates in one's society.

The Lord himself has said, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64).

Would a true Christian injure another?

As has been indicated, there are a few who have taken it upon themselves as their mission to belittle and demean and destroy the faith of the weak, with a badly flawed argument that we are not Christians.

To all of these we have a twofold answer, quietly spoken. The first is this: Would a true follower of Christ, a follower of him who was the epitome of love and mercy and consideration, so seek to injure another?

"By their fruits ye shall know them"

The second: We ask only that we be judged by our fruits. Said the Master:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . .

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-18, 20).

By that standard we are willing to be judged.

In God's hands

At a time when we were under far more intensive siege than we are today, President Joseph F. Smith stood at this pulpit in this Tabernacle and said:

"We thank God for His mercies and blessings; and I do not know but what we owe in some small degree gratitude to those who have bitterly opposed the work of the Lord; for in all their opposings and bitter strife against our people the Lord has developed His power and wisdom, and has brought His people more fully into the knowledge and favor of the intelligent people of the earth. Through the very means used by those who have opposed the work of God, He has brought out good for Zion. Yet, it is written, and I believe it is true, that although it must needs be that offenses come, woe unto them by whom they come; but they are in the hands of the Lord as we are. We bring no railing accusation against them. We are willing to leave them in the hands of the Almighty to deal with them as seemeth Him good. Our business is to work righteousness in the earth, to seek for the development of a knowledge of God's will and of God's ways, and of His great and glorious truths which He has revealed through the instrumentality of Joseph the Prophet, not only for the salvation of the living but for the redemption and salvation of the dead" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1908, pp. 2-3).

And so we let the matter rest there.

Live gospel standards

Now let those of us who have traveled to the conference return to our homes with resolution in our hearts, and those of us who have participated in the conference by means of satellite transmission, television, and radio resolve also that we shall try a little harder to live the standards of the gospel, of which we have heard these days; that we shall lower our voices of criticism and negativism; that we will look for good in the world; that as employees we

will be honest with our employers in giving of our time and of our talents; that we shall cultivate within our hearts a love one for another, both within and without the Church; that as husbands and wives we shall be true to one another in every respect; that every husband and holder of the priesthood will treat his companion and children with love and deference; that we will cultivate in our homes family prayer, making it the habit of our daily lives; that we will deal honestly with all men and walk humbly and obediently with God our Eternal Father. For this I humbly pray.

Blessings upon this people

I remember as a boy sitting in this Tabernacle and hearing President Heber J. Grant, his voice trembling with conviction, read these words:

"How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints" (D&C 121:33).

I believed those words when I heard President Grant read them then. I believe them now. I believe without any question, my brethren and sisters, that this is the work of God and that he is pouring out, in a marvelous and miraculous way, his blessings upon this people.

Walk without fear

We held in this hall a week ago last evening a great meeting of the women of the Church. And beyond this hall, there were thousands and tens of thousands assembled in more than six hundred other halls, to which the proceedings of this meeting were carried by satellite transmission. I thought of the miracle of it, the marvel of it, of this great sisterhood of more than a million wonderful women, devoted to

the gospel of Jesus Christ, who walk with faith in their hearts—mothers, whose greatest desire is to rear another generation of faithful sons and daughters, who love the Lord and are willing to walk in obedience to the commandments of the Master.

And then last evening we had assembled here the men, the priesthood of the Church, hundreds of thousands—here and across the world in more than 1,153 other places, as well as the 600 stake centers to which the proceedings of the earlier meeting were carried. And I said again to myself, “What glorious things the God of heaven has wrought in behalf of his people.” Let us be thankful; let us walk in gratitude; let us walk without fear.

There comes into my mind these great words from one of the letters of Paul to Timothy:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

I commend those marvelous words to you: “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”

“Deny yourselves of all ungodliness”

I wish to read as we conclude this great conference this challenge of Moroni, among the last words that he wrote after wandering in loneliness for a long period. As he looked down to this day when his record should come forth, he gave this great charge to us of this generation:

“And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy

beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:31–32).

As we all sang together in this meeting that stirring hymn, the chorus of which contains these words, my heart was lifted in a great surge of emotion concerning the faith of this people:

I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and
cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous,
omnipotent hand.
("How Firm a Foundation,"
Hymns, no. 66.)

Blessings of heaven

I leave you my testimony and invoke the blessings of heaven upon you. I know that God our Eternal Father lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and the Redeemer of mankind. I know that this is the work of the Lord, that this Church is established upon a foundation of Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. (See Ephesians 2:20.) I know these things, and I know that you know them; and with that knowledge may we go forward with our lives, walking with integrity and gladness and faith, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang
“Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer.”

Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., offered the benediction.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

With the theme "A Season for Strength," a general women's meeting was held Saturday evening, September 24, 1983, in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. Latter-day Saint women and girls ten years of age and older met in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on Temple Square and gathered in meetinghouses to view the proceedings by television and satellite coverage. The program included music

by a multiregion women's chorus, pre-recorded tape segments, and talks by President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency and the general presidents of the Relief Society, Primary, and Young Women.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor to the First Presidency, gave the following talk at that meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved sisters, it is a privilege and an honor to be with you.

You are not alone

I suppose this is the largest gathering of women ever convened in the history of the Church. The Tabernacle is filled to capacity. Additionally, women are assembled in over six hundred stake centers, and many others are watching in homes where television is available. As I have looked over this vast congregation, I have thought, "What a profitable day for the hairdressers!"

I know that many of you out there feel lonely at times. Some of you girls find that there are only two or three Latter-day Saints in the large schools which you attend. You women who work may find yourselves the only members of the Church at your places of employment. You who are widows and some who have been divorced may feel that you are alone. The numbers who are participating in this meeting tonight should give you the assurance that you are not alone. You are part of the greatest sorority or sisterhood on earth. It probably includes some two million women.

"What are little girls made of?"

This vast congregation includes girls and women from the age of ten and up. I am happy for the inclusion of the ten-year-olds. Ten is a great age, a beautiful age, when a child who previously appeared to be all arms and legs and appetite seems to partake of a refining influence that brings with it beauty and grace. It is like blossoms in the spring that burst with the warmth of the sun. It is a time of awakening of mental and physical powers. It is the bridge season between childhood and youth.

Do you know that the great prophet-historian Mormon received his charge concerning the sacred records when he was only ten years of age? The book which we have today, this sacred and marvelous testament of Christ, resulted from Mormon's faithfulness in meeting that assignment. Never discount the importance of a ten-year-old.

"What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice, and everything nice." So goes the old nursery rhyme. But more importantly, they are the promise of the future. Through them, eventually, must filter the qualities of all of the earlier generations, which will become the bone and the tissue, the minds and the spirits, of the generations yet to be.

To you young girls I say with all of the strength and conviction I can muster, be sweet, be good, be strong

Saturday, September 24, 1983

and virtuous and wonderful. Somehow I feel that the Lord included you with those of whom he spoke when he said, "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Channing Pollock, the gifted author and playwright, once wished, through one of his characters, that we might all be born old and gradually grow younger and ever more innocent until at death we have become as little children.

Young women: Prepare for any eventuality

I next would like to say a few words to you young women, you who have crossed the threshold from childhood and early youth into the maturity of your later teens and early twenties. For you this must be a season for strength. It is a season that demands discipline of mind and of body. This is the season for preparation, and the Lord has said, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

It is a time for education. The world that lies ahead of you will be fiercely competitive. Now is the time to train yourselves for possible future responsibilities.

Education is a tradition that has come down from our early history. We believe in the training of our youth, girls as well as boys. Brigham Young once said, "We have sisters here who, if they had the privilege of studying, would make just as good mathematicians or accountants as any man" (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:61).

You have available to you tremendous opportunities for training your minds and your hands. You will wish for marriage and the companionship of a good husband. But none of us can foretell the future. Prepare yourselves for any eventuality. You need not go to a university if that is not your taste. There are wonderful technical colleges across the land which will hone your skills and assist you in qualifying yourselves for future responsibilities.

Hopefully, most of you will marry. But the training you have received will not have been in vain. It will be a blessing whether you be single or married.

Keep yourselves worthy of marriage. This is an age when strength is needed to retain that worthiness. Seldom if ever in the history of the world have we been so widely exposed to those seductive influences which lead to degradation, sin, and regret. The merchants of pornography and some designers of entertainment are as clever as hell itself with their beguiling wares. They would lead you into a trap that could eventually bring only sorrow, remorse, and heartache.

Said the Lord, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." He then gave this promise: "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. . . .

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion . . . ; thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45-46).

Exaltation

I paraphrase a few words of a statement made by the First Presidency more than forty years ago:

How glorious is she who lives a chaste life. She walks unfearful in the full glare of the noonday sun, for she is without moral infirmity. She can be reached by no shafts of base calumny, for her armor is without flaw. Her virtue cannot be challenged by any just accuser, for she lives above reproach. Her cheek is never blotched with shame, for she is without hidden sin. She is honored and respected by all mankind, for she is beyond their censure. She is loved by the Lord, for she stands without blemish. The exaltations of eternities await her coming. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. by James R. Clark, 6 vols [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975], 3 Oct. 1942, p. 6:177.)

Now if there be any here who have slipped, I hold out to you the assurance that there is forgiveness for the individual who truly repents. God will forgive those who acknowledge the error of their ways and who demonstrate by the goodness of their lives the sincerity of their repentance.

Marriage in the temple: A privilege beyond price

I should like now to say a few words to those of you who are married. I would hope that you may have been married in the house of the Lord. Our Father in Heaven, who loves his children, has provided for them a privilege beyond price, and that is the eternal sealing of the most precious of all relationships.

To you who have this priceless blessing, live worthy of it. Loyalty is of the very essence of your temple vows and covenants—loyalty to your companion, loyalty to your children, loyalty to God with whom you have made solemn covenant. He will not be mocked. Glorious and wonderful are the promises to those who keep their covenants and walk in obedience to his divine commandments. The sense of responsibility that comes therewith will sweeten marriage, will bring a sanctifying influence to the home, will make more precious the children who come of that union, and will give peace throughout the seasons of life and comfort in time of death.

Be patient and be an example

I recognize that there are many in this vast congregation who have not had the opportunity of temple marriage, whose husbands may not be members of the Church or may not have qualified themselves to go to the house of the Lord. To you I wish to say, be patient, be prayerful. Stifle your tendency to criticize. Live the kind of life in your home that will cause your companion to see in you that goodness, that

virtue, and that strength which come of the gospel.

I remember a family I knew fifty years ago. The wife was a devoted member of the Church. The husband was not a member. He smoked and drank. She hoped and she prayed. She lived for the day when his heart might be touched by the Spirit of the Lord. Years passed one after another into more than a decade. Her example was one of goodness and gladness and faith. After many years he began to soften. He saw what the Church did for her and for their children. He turned around. He humbled himself. He was baptized. He has since served as a quorum president and a bishop, as a missionary, and as a worker in the temple.

You have not failed until you have quit trying, and please remember that your example in your home will be a more persuasive sermon than will any other kind of preaching.

Salute to homemakers

I salute most warmly and sincerely you dedicated and wonderful homemakers. I have only respect for the title "housewife."

I clipped this from the *Wall Street Journal*, titled "The Most Creative Job in the World":

"It involves taste, fashion, decorating, recreation, education, transportation, psychology, romance, cuisine, designing, literature, medicine, handicraft, art, horticulture, economics, government, community relations, pediatrics, geriatrics, entertainment, maintenance, purchasing, direct mail, law, accounting, religion, energy and management. Anyone who can handle all those has to be somebody special. She is. She's a homemaker" (3 June 1983).

Unmarried: Take advantage of opportunities

Now, a word to you who have not married. It would be a beautiful world if every girl had the privilege of mar-

Saturday, September 24, 1983

riage to a good man whom she could look upon with pride and gladness as her companion in time and eternity, hers alone to love and cherish, to respect and help.

But it does not always work out that way. There are some who, for reasons unexplainable, do not have the opportunity of marriage. To you I should like to say, don't spend your time and wear out your lives wandering about in the wasteland of self-pity. God has given you talents of one kind or another. He has given you the capacity to serve the needs of others and bless their lives with your kindness and concern. Reach out to someone in need. There are so very many out there.

Add knowledge to knowledge. Refine your mind and skills in a chosen field of discipline. There are tremendous opportunities for you if you are prepared to take advantage of them. Nearly all of the honorable vocations of life are now open to women. Do not feel that because you are single God has forsaken you. The world needs you. The Church needs you. So very many people and causes need your strength and wisdom and talents.

Be prayerful, and do not lose hope. But do not become obsessed with ambition to find a companion. Your obsession likely will only make you less attractive, or it may cause a weakening of your standards. Live the very best life of which you are capable, and the Lord in his greater wisdom and in his eternal season will give you answer to your prayers.

To mothers who must work

To you women who find it necessary to work when you would rather be at home, may I speak briefly. I know that there are many of you who find yourselves in this situation. Some of you have been abandoned and are divorced, with children to care for. Some of you are widows with dependent families. I honor you and respect you for your integrity and spirit of self-reliance. I pray that the Lord will bless

you with strength and great capacity, for you need both. You have the responsibilities of both breadwinner and homemaker. I know that it is difficult. I know that it is discouraging. I pray that the Lord will bless you with a special wisdom and the remarkable talent needed to provide your children with time and companionship and love and with that special direction which only a mother can give. I pray also that he will bless you with help, unstintingly given, from family, friends, and the Church, which will lift some of the burden from your shoulders and help you in your times of extremity.

We sense, at least in some small degree, the loneliness you must occasionally feel and the frustrations you must experience as you try to cope with problems that sometimes seem beyond your capacity to handle. Sometimes you need food for your tables, and we trust that bishops will be there to supply food and other goods and services under the great program which the Lord has provided in his Church. But we know that more often your greater need is for understanding and appreciation and companionship. We shall try a little harder to cultivate these virtues, and I urge you sisters who are in a position to do so to reach out with greater concern to those who find themselves in these less fortunate circumstances.

To mothers who work when not necessary

Now to others who work when it is not necessary and who, while doing so, leave children to the care of those who often are only poor substitutes, I offer a word of caution. Do not follow a practice which will bring you later regret. If the purpose of your daily employment is simply to get money for a boat or a fancy automobile or some other desirable but unnecessary thing, and in the process you lose the companionship of your children and the opportunity to rear them, you may find that you have lost the substance while grasping at the shadow.

Women's responsibility in building the kingdom

In conclusion, I should like to say a word to all women of the Church. I know of no doctrine which states that we made a choice when we came to earth as to whether we wished to be male or female. That choice was made by our Father in Heaven in his infinite wisdom. I am satisfied that he loves his daughters as much as he loves his sons. President Harold B. Lee once remarked that priesthood is the power by which God works through us as men. I should like to add that motherhood is the means by which God carries forward his grand design of continuity of the race. Both priesthood and motherhood are essentials of the plan of the Lord.

Each complements the other. Each is needed by the other. God has created us male and female, each unique in his or her individual capacities and potential. The woman is the bearer and the nurturer of children. The man is the provider and protector. No legislation can alter the sexes. Legislation should provide equality of opportunity, equality of compensation, equality of political privilege. But any legislation which is designed to create neuter gender of that which God created male and female will bring more problems than benefits. Of that I am convinced.

I wish with all my heart we would spend less of our time talking about rights and more talking about responsibilities. God has given the women of this Church a work to do in building his kingdom. That concerns all aspects of our great triad of responsibility—which is, first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the faith and build the happiness of the member-

ship of the Church; and, third, to carry forward the great work of salvation for the dead.

A season for strength

This is a season for strength. I conclude with these stirring words of Moroni, written as he sealed his record to come forth in the dispensation of the fulness of times:

"Awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:31-32).

Live up to your inheritance

Put on thy beautiful garments, O daughters of Zion. Live up to the great and magnificent inheritance which the Lord God, your Father in Heaven, has provided for you. Rise above the dust of the world. Know that you are daughters of God, children with a divine birthright. Walk in the sun with your heads high, knowing that you are loved and honored, that you are a part of his kingdom, and that there is for you a great work to be done which cannot be left to others.

God be thanked for the wonderful women of this Church. May he plant in your hearts a sense of pride in your capacities and a conviction of truth which shall be as a rudder to keep you safe through every storm, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 2, 1983, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

(Choir without announcement: "Ode to Music"—Butler)

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir opened today's broadcast of Music and the Spoken Word singing a composition by Eugene Butler with text by John Dwight, "Ode to Music."

The Choir next sings music by Tschesnokoff, "Now We Sing Thy Praise . . . Lord of all creation."

(Choir: "Now We Sing Thy Praise"—Tschesnokoff)

Announcer: Tenor soloist Kenneth Jones joins the Choir in singing the music of B. Cecil Gates, "I know that My Redeemer Lives . . . to bless and comfort me through the years."

(Choir: "My Redeemer Lives"—Gates)

Announcer: At the console of the Tabernacle organ on Temple Square, Robert Cundick plays "Minuet" from the *Suite Gothique* by Leon Boellman.

(Organ: "Minuet"—Boellman)

Announcer: We live in a beautiful world, a world of not only beautiful objects, but of beautiful moments, beautiful experiences. Each season is glorious in its time, and each has its lesson. Presently the harvested fields are being turned under, and the rich aroma of earth and decaying stubble forewarns the snow of winter. And winter will come, then spring, and each beautiful moment of growth and maturity and change will bring forth its scent and scene.

All this beauty is real, not only in itself but it is also an emblem and evidence of him who made it, as are each of us. The world is made for our instruction as well as our pleasure. However, we may not always see beauty where God made things beautiful. Moments may escape us, and we may focus too much on the evidence of physical things.

When the Lord called upon the prophet Samuel to anoint David as king of Israel, Samuel was instructed: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Too frequently in a world of commerce, "outward appearance" becomes an end in itself rather than serving as an emblem of that deeper, more fundamental spiritual beauty. Often a "successful" appearance is regarded as more important than the true success of virtue; too often people are not judged by the beauty of their hearts, but by the costliness of their apparel, by the size and year of their automobiles, by the location and square footage of their homes. The beauty and wealth of the earth, which God intended for our edification and enjoyment, become merely indications of rank and status,

the means of separating us one from another, and from our God.

As we try to understand and to recognize the beauty of life, it is important for us to remember that the Savior himself was not born to wealth or station, but to the simple beauty of a manger. The humility of his birth—of his upbringing as a carpenter and of the society he kept with fishermen—is a lesson to us in how to see our world, what to look for in it, and what to find in one another.

If we can see beauty where God made it, and if we can learn to see through the beautiful moment to God himself, then perhaps we will understand the beauty of humility—even the humility of the Savior—and the glory of a humble heart.

(Choir without announcement: "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth"—"English Chorister")

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir has sung an English hymn tune with a text by Parley P. Pratt, "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

The Choir closes today's broadcast singing the music of Charles Gounod, "O Divine Redeemer."

(Choir: "O Divine Redeemer"—Gounod)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, eight-hundred, twenty-fourth performance continuing the fifty-fifth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert Bowden conducting.

At the general priesthood meeting, a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon

Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden furnished the music.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

INDEX

A

Asay, Elder Carlos E.	16
Parent-child interviews; Dry interviews; Wet interviews; Questioning a son's beliefs; Faith and devotion; The Alma-Helaman approach; Means and ends	
Ashton, Elder Marvin J.	86
"Be something, Abe,"; Commitment to worthy goals and gospel principles; Is it I?; Positive motivation to total commitment; Genius, power, and magic; See beauties and thrills, not flaws; Use Christ as master teacher; Not far enough; Commitment to God, the Savior, and the Church	
Authorities and Officers, Sustaining of General	3
Authorities Present, General	1
Authorities Present, Other	1

B

Benson, President Ezra Taft (First Session)	5
Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; Hope, confidence, and strength to overcome; The Lord God Omnipotent; Son of God; The Redeemer; The great Lawgiver; The Rock of our salvation; Only He was able and willing to redeem; The Resurrection and the Life; Great Exemplar; The Bread of Life; Prince of Peace; The Good Shepherd; Wonderful Counselor; Advocate, Mediator, Judge; "Love the Lord . . . and thy neighbor"; The perfect example	
Benson, President Ezra Taft (Priesthood Meeting)	61
What manner of men ought we to be?; Emulate the character of the Savior; The Christlike traits; Virtuous behavior; Temperate in emotions and expressions; Patient and understanding; Kind and gentle; Emulate Christ's way of life; Desire a righteous and virtuous life; Call upon God and give away all sins; Act as He would act; The commandments to love; Love wife and family; Leadership in the home; Change of attitude and behavior; Christlike traits to permeate home; Resolve to "put on Christ"	
Bradford, Elder William R.	98
Heavenly Father gave us a plan; Lucifer brought sin and transgression; Death and separation; "How do you know?"; Messages of the Book of Mormon; Problem: Man transgressed holy commandments; Solution: Fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ; The Resurrection and the Atonement; The need for a savior; Another testament of Jesus Christ	

D

- Didier, Elder Charles** 31
 Friend or foe; Love your enemies; Friend of world is enemy of God; Enemy to God; True friend of God; "He is our friend"; David and Jonathan; Choose the right
- Dunn, Brother James M.** 49
 First baptism; Blessings of missionary work; Influencing lives for the better; Energized, enthusiastic, optimistic, and confident; "*Y Yo Tercero*"; Colombian missionaries; No one pointing accusing finger; A missionary testimony
- Dunn, Elder Paul H.** 34
 Speaking of age; Older and better; Each day with relish and interest; The elderly bless our lives; "Wake me when they come"; Three conclusions and the personal touch; Reach out with love

F

- Faust, Elder James E.** 9
 Witnesses to Book of Mormon; The keystone of our religion; Keystone of our individual faith; What Book of Mormon is not; Confirming evidence of Jesus; To bring us unto Christ; Translated with aid and power of God; Confirmation by the Holy Spirit; Testimony as special witness
- Featherstone, Elder Vaughn J.** 52
 Caring—the motivating force; Growing up no picnic; Henry Eyring's "style"; "I was listening"; "What do I need to do?"; Eyes open and a prayer in your heart; Commit to pray; Harness the energies of love; Bruford Reynolds believed in me; "He will lead in high places in the Church"; What life is all about; Love and farewell between a great adviser and a boy; Watchmen and torchbearers

- Fifth Session** 90
- First Day—Afternoon Meeting** 23
- First Day—Morning Meeting** 2
- First Session** 2
- Fourth Session** 69

G

- General Authorities and Officers, Sustaining of** 3
- General Authorities Present** 1

General Priesthood Meeting	45
General Women's Meeting	111
Goasland, Elder Jack H., Jr.	46
The Lord's "last lecture"; The salvation of souls; Preach the gospel; God will hold us responsible; Working for the salvation of others; Obligation to serve a mission	

H

Haight, Elder David B.	57
Two young men took different paths; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"; Save our youth and save generations; Put the priesthood of God to work; Strengthen thy brethren; Guidelines through First Presidency and Twelve; Waiting for a knock on their door; Become a star thrower	
Hales, Elder Robert D.	94
Sorrow and suffering; Can hurt loved ones most; Sorrow can be turned to joy; Savior's visit in spirit world; Suffering tries and tests; Repentance; Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; The atoning sacrifice	
Hanks, Elder Marion D.	28
Suppose civilization were about to end; God loves us and believes in us; Lucifer wanted forced salvation; Still choosing; "He died for me"; Godly love and free agency; Choose life and good; God and Christ love us; Love as the heart of agency	
Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Fifth Session)	107
The spirit of the conference; Read and implement the counsel; Critics mock the sacred; Would a true Christian injure another?; "By their fruits ye shall know them"; In God's hands; Live gospel standards; Blessings upon this people; Walk without fear; "Deny yourselves of all ungodliness"; Blessings of heaven	
Hinckley, President Gordon B. (First Session)	3
Faith as our foundation; President Kimball's influence; The power of love; Hallmark of the true church; Onward progress of the kingdom	
Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Fourth Session)	70
Work moving forward; Help given in Utah—; In Tonga—; In Brazil—; In Ghana; Atlanta Temple; Samoa and Tonga temples; Santiago Chile Temple; The youth—certain promise of the future; A history of faith; A great future; A great distance to go; God grant us faith	
Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Priesthood Meeting)	65
Young men: Congratulations on goodness of your lives; Lure	

of immorality; Repentance and forgiveness; Education; Older brethren: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"; The plague of pornography; Dangers of television; Nephi foresaw our day; That which "carefully leads him down to hell"; Critics belittle the divine; Critics belittle our forebears; "Look to God and live"; Follow leadership of the Church

Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Women's Meeting) 111

You are not alone; "What are little girls made of?"; Young women: Prepare for any eventuality; Exaltation; Marriage in the temple: A privilege beyond price; Be patient and be an example; Salute to homemakers; Unmarried: Take advantage of opportunities; To mothers who must work; To mothers who work when not necessary; Women's responsibility in building the kingdom; A season for strength; Live up to your inheritance

Hunter, Elder Howard W. 91

To parents with feelings of guilt and unworthiness; Rare not to make errors; Influences on children; Not alone; Errors of judgment and the principle of repentance; Don't give up hope, and know where responsibility lies; Be careful in judgments; Responsibilities of parenthood; Don't ruin your life

K

Komatsu, Elder Adney Y. 37

Why temples; The house of the Lord; The Kirtland Temple; "The fulness of the priesthood"; The new and everlasting covenant; Baptism for the dead; Importance and blessings of the work

M

Maxwell, Elder Neal A. 75

"Both good and evil spoken of"; Tutored by the Lord and by past prophets; Childlike and saintly submissiveness; Help in overcoming temptation; Petitionary prayer; Rich language and deep concepts; Joseph learned inspirational expression; Opposition in all things; Anxieties and unjust accusations; Loved the work and his associates; Leader-servant; Tens of thousands come to truth; Gratitude for the Prophet

McConkie, Elder Bruce R. 103

Read, ponder, and pray about Book of Mormon; American witness of Christ; Sincere and devout people; Door to salvation; Read, ponder, and pray to gain witness; Pray in faith; Pray, study, ask; Of the Lord or of Lucifer?; A test; What think ye of the Book of Mormon?; God has spoken in our day; Prepare men for now and for eternity

Monson, Elder Thomas S. 24

Labels on paintings; "Destined for immortal glory"; The

prophet Samuel; The promised Messiah; The label of a traitor; A changed attitude; President Gustav Wacker; "The Lord looketh on the heart"

Music, Summary of Conference 117

P

Packer, Elder Boyd K. 19

A lesson; The mystery of life; Unanswered questions; Answers to deep questions; Sacred things hidden from the insincere; Children of God; Imaginary football battle; The test and the purpose; Testing can have opposite effects; Doctrine of premortal life; Cause to rejoice

Perry, Elder L. Tom 12

Strength in family unit; Duty and privilege to teach prayer; Divine fellowship with God; Draw near to our Father; How to address the Lord; Language of prayer; Gratitude to the Lord; What to pray for; Time for prayer; Teaching prayer by example

Petersen, Elder Mark E. 40

The Angel Moroni came!; The ministry of angels!; Angel to bring the everlasting gospel; Moroni and the early history of America; Other ancient records on metal plates; Containers for ancient records; Moroni buried the records; Angels, Apostles, prophets, revelations; Moroni fulfilled two prophecies; A prophet raised up; A marvelous work and a wonder; Testimony of Moroni and the Prophet Joseph Smith

Peterson, Bishop H. Burke 83

An unforgiving and unforgetting spirit; The price of revenge; The cleansing process; Loving every person; Forgive and be forgiven; The Savior's example; Plead for the spirit of forgiveness

Priesthood Meeting, General 45

R

Richards, Elder Franklin D. 80

The Lord has sustained me; With humble hearts and firm commitment; A message of peace; Need for peacemakers; Young adult peacemakers; Ways to be peacemakers; Be a peacemaker

S

Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast 116

Scott, Elder Richard G. 101

The Savior knows you; Service to others; When lights go out; Three things to mend and heal; Build others; Power of the gospel

Second Day—Afternoon Meeting	90
Second Day—Morning Meeting	69
Second Session	23
Summary of Conference Music	117
Sustaining of General Authorities and Officers	3

T

Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast, Salt Lake	116
Third Session	45

W

Women's Meeting, General	111
--------------------------------	-----

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS